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Official Magazine - Australia

41 PS3 REVIEWS

Stranglehold, Lair, Colin McRae, Stuntman & more!

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UNREAL III

Gears of War creator's PS3 exclusive leaves 360 for dead!

FIRST REVIEW!

Unbelievable combat, brilliant SIXAXIS support and the best graphics ever seen!

LAIR

Smoking hot or just full of hot air? Exclusive review inside!

METAL GEAR SOLID 4

Amazing new stealth moves that change everything!

DUTY CALLS!

We play the Game of the Year - Call of Duty 4!

CHEATERS PROSPER

Discover the PS2's greatest ever tricks and cheats!

RUGBY 08

EA tackles the World Cup! Official verdict revealed!

ISSUE 8 OCTOBER 2007
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DERWENT HOWARD

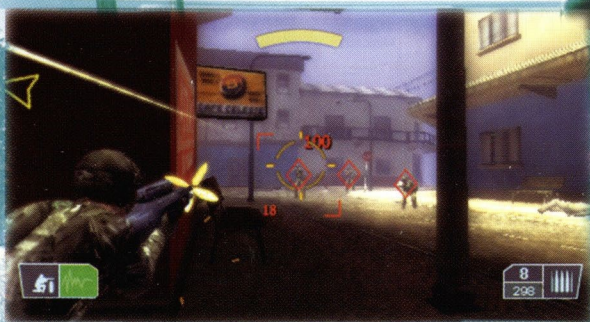


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NEW PS3 CONTENT

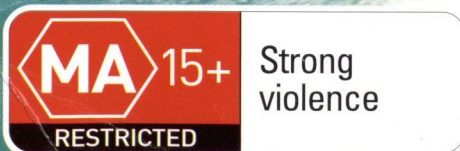
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EDITOR'S LETTER



It's been weird month. The gaming industry's seen more ups and downs than a porno flick in fast-forward. The downers – *Lair* and the delays for *GTAIV* and *Resident Evil 5* – were painful blows but there were so many unexpected highlights that it's impossible not to grin idiotically (pictured above) with excitement over the games arriving over the next few months.

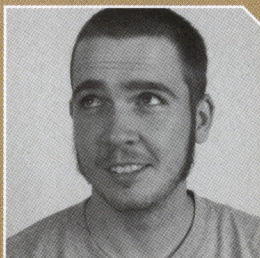
I'd like to offer a little insight behind this

month's batch of review scores. You may be surprised by the lowish scores for big-name PS3 games like *Lair* and *Stranglehold*. This has got a lot to do with those highlights I just mentioned. While *Stranglehold* and, to a lesser extent, *Lair* are solid games they've simply been blown away by the unexpected brilliance of many other games we played this month. *Heavenly Sword*, *Stuntman*, *Warhawk*, *Call of Duty 4*, *Unreal 3* and *DIRT* have each redefined what's previously been thought possible. There are so many freakishly amazing games arriving that almost overnight it's become much harder for lesser games to compete. This will no doubt be a tough lesson for developers that haven't aimed high enough but it's fantastic news for gamers who will soon be truly awed by the next generation experiences the PS3 is now delivering.

NARAYAN PATTISON
Editor

Narayan Pattison
PS3 online: **The_Duude**

'Post-GTAIV delay' Game of 2007...



LUKE REILLY

GTAIV delayed AND *Rock Band* isn't coming out until next year in Australia? Why don't you just steal my car and run over my dog while you're at it you fickle gaming gods? Have ye no compassion? Still, methinks *Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway* could be the game for Lukey...

PS3 online: **Capt_Flashheart**



MARK SERRELS

Wah wah wah, *GTA's* been delayed. Stop whining you little cry baby bitches. Markie boy was already struggling to find time in his tight gaming schedule, and its not like its never going to come out. Oh, and my game of the year will be (hopefully) *Assassin's Creed*.

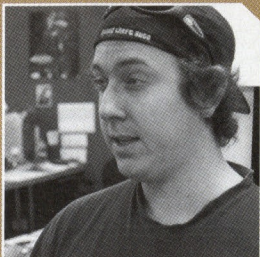
PS3 online: **Serrels**



PHILLIP JORGE

GTAIV's been delayed? No biggie. There's only one game on the Phill-meister's radar and that's *Heavenly Sword*. I just completed *God of War II...* on Titan difficulty... blindfolded... AGAIN! Daddy needs a new slice of action and Nariko looks like the lass with the goods.

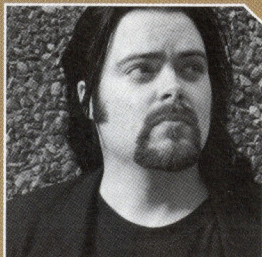
PS3 online: **PhiLLipO**



NICK O'SHEA

Though there are epic action blockbusters like *Heavenly Sword* and *Warhawk* in the wings, I'm still going to be putting more time into *Monster Hunter Freedom 2* because I'm a game-playin', dragon-slayin', armor-craftin', wyvern-blastin' son of a gun! WOO!

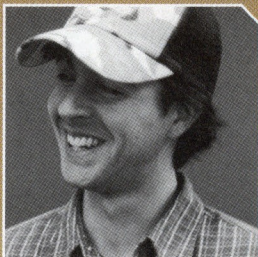
PS3 online: **Sidochrome**



ANTHONY O'CONNOR

After drowning my sorrows I told the cop, "It's a tie between *Assassin's* and *COD4*." I was naked at the time, painted blue and demanding to be called "Papa Smurf" – but I stand by my choices. Side note: does anyone know how to get blue paint off your doodle?

PS3 online: **stoxy242**



JAMES ELLIS

Warhawk will be bigger than Elvis in Vegas, plus it's set to turn up the heat within the PlayStation Network furnace. Massive dogfights, overland assaults, and lots of verbal trash talk will score Sony's champ the gold. Look for me to rain death from above.

PS3 online: **gtfaster49**

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SHOUT OUTS: Apologies to Eric Holmes for not correctly crediting him in our *Prototype* interview

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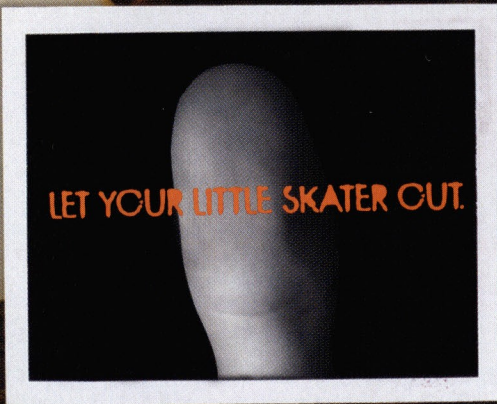
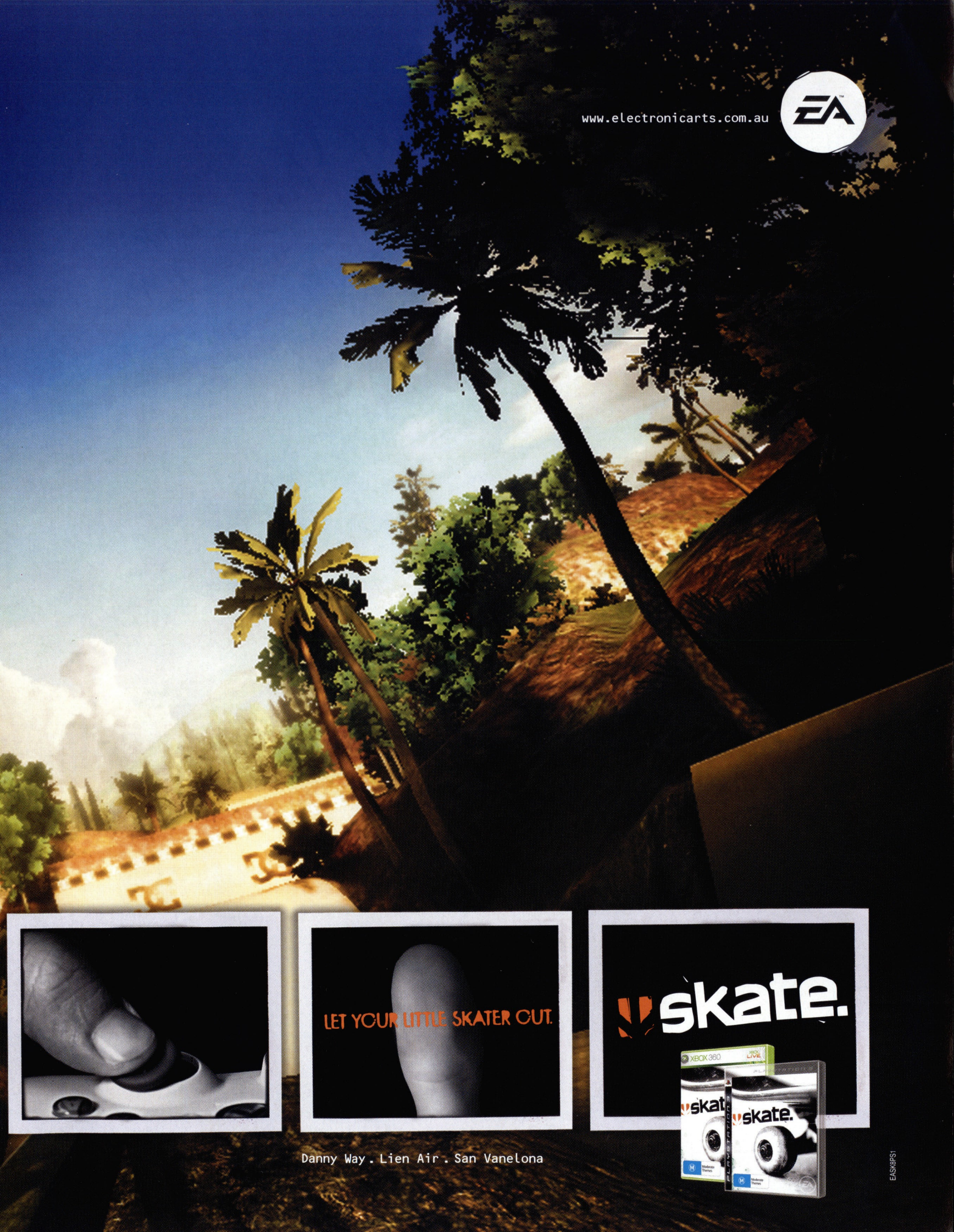
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NEWS

SCREENSHOT OF THE MONTH

Edited by Mark Serrels

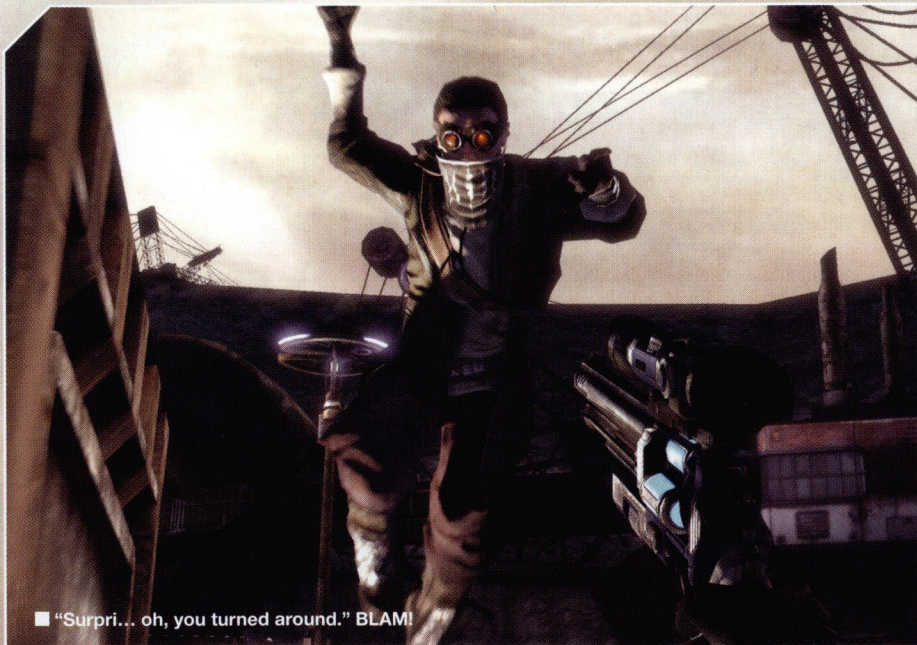
- MGS Blowout • GTAIV Delayed
- Gaming habits revealed • Resident Evil 5
- and much, much more...

BORDERLANDS

Despite having a name that sounds dangerously close Madonna's gay anthem 'Borderline', Borderlands is looking remarkably good at this stage in development. We mean, look at this guy: he's jumping... in an 'actioney' manner... into what is literally a *herd* of cars. If that doesn't scream out 'awesome' to you, then you are dead, or at the very least terminally ill.

WE KNOW NOTHING!

To be honest, we know more about the location of Jimmy Hoffa that we do about this game, but at this stage the art design is looking 'Mad Maxey'. Despite this screenshot, the game is actually an FPS/ RPG hybrid.



■ "Surpri... oh, you turned around." BLAM!



C

UNREAL...

Like a gazillion games before it, *Borderlands* uses the Unreal 3 engine to generate its 'supa-sexy grafix'. Why do they all use said engine? Take a look at the screenshot dummy – it looks slicker than Errol Flynn's moustache. Rest assured, this game will look seven different kinds of tasty.

FOR THE LATEST GAMING NEWS HEAD TO WWW.GAMEPLAYER.COM.AU

PS3

PS2

PSP

METAL GEAR BLOWOUT

Best Birthday EVER!

In addition to the guaranteed system seller *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots*, a new online *Metal Gear* has recently been announced for the PS3 and typically, it's looking like another stellar entry into the renowned franchise. While the primary reason for the recent Konami media gathering in Tokyo was to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the original *Metal Gear*, Kojima used the opportunity to release info on his latest online offering. In addition, the latest entry into the *Portable Ops* series was also showcased, not to mention the absolutely mind blowing gameplay demonstration of *Guns of the Patriots* itself (see page 26 for more details).

Although the long awaited *MGS4* gameplay demo undoubtedly stole the show, the biggest surprise of the party went to the unveiling of the new *Metal Gear Online* game. Set to be an entirely new game, as opposed to a simple online feature in *GOTP*, *Metal Gear Online* looks set to take everything that made *Subsistence* such a satisfying online experience and ramp it up even further using the stunning graphics engine utilised in *Metal Gear Solid 4*.

Described as a "strategic multiplayer experience" *Metal Gear Online* allows up to 16 players to engage in some sneaky hide and seek action. A major addition to the gameplay is the

SOP system; utilising those nano machines you have no doubt heard about (considering the multiple hours of codec conversations you've probably had to sit through) the SOP system enables you to track your team's positions, their range of sight, condition, and the direction they're facing. The twist to this concept is that enemies on the opposing team can also be tracked in this manner, if you can find a way to inject your foes with the same nano machine.

Konami also confirmed that a beta for the online game would go live, beginning on August 7 and concluding on September 3. So it's quite probable that the beta will be over by the time of print. At the moment we have no idea whether this beta is specific to Japan or not, but it more than likely won't make its way to our shores. *Metal Gear Online*, like *Guns of the Patriots*, is a confirmed PS3 exclusive and should be released sometime in early 2008.

SNAKE'S BIRTHDAY PRESENTS

Poor Snake, if he was a real person, as opposed to a fictional videogame character he would have had the time of his life at his party, boozing it up with Hideo Kojima, Kaz Hirai, and a host of other gaming celebrities. Sadly Snake's presence at his own party was strictly limited to showings of *MGS4*, *Metal Gear Online*, and these other, soon to be released, bad boys...



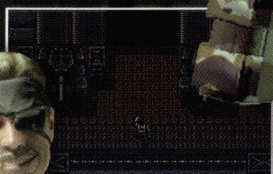
METAL GEAR?! PORTABLE OPS...

A new expansion pack for the popular PSP franchise is almost ready for release, continuing the Big Boss storyline that began in *MGS3: Snake Eater*. Considering the original PSP masterpiece, it's hard to imagine this being anything but another stellar entry into the *Metal Gear* franchise.



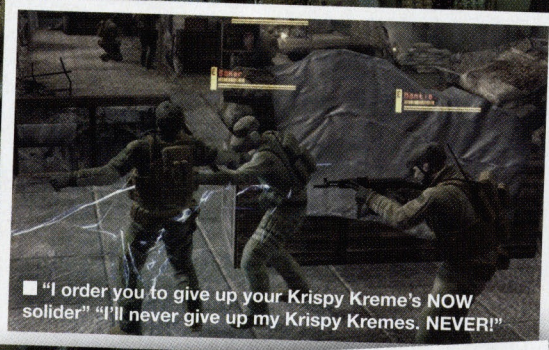
METAL GEAR?! DIGITAL COMIC...

A digital comic book covering the events of *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* is also on its way to the PSP. More of a niche product for the hardcore demographic, this continues the earlier *MGS: Digital Graphic Novel* and will be a nice pick up for those interested in the art of the illustrious series.

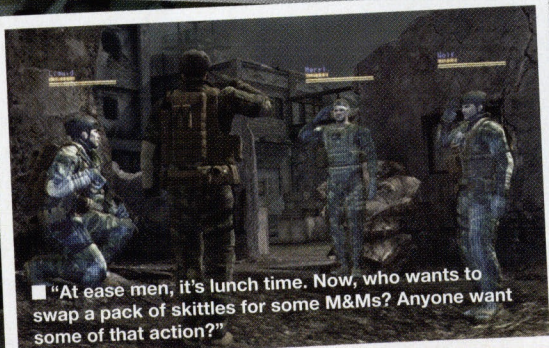


METAL GEAR?! MOBILE PHONE...

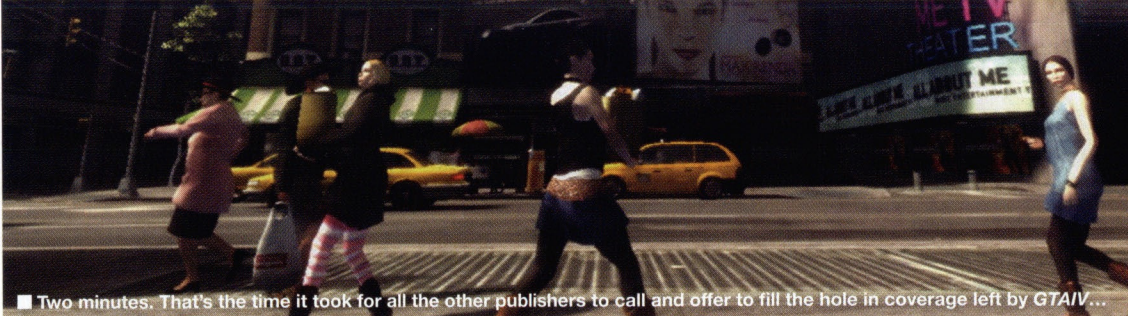
Man, talk about pimping out a franchise. Kojima also shamelessly plugged a brand new *Metal Gear* mobile phone, complete with some Snake artwork. It may sound lame, but if we could combine such a phone with a codec ringtone, we could conceivably take over the world.



■ "I order you to give up your Krispy Kreme's NOW soldier!" "I'll never give up my Krispy Kremes. NEVER!"



■ "At ease men, it's lunch time. Now, who wants to swap a pack of skittles for some M&Ms? Anyone want some of that action?"



■ Two minutes. That's the time it took for all the other publishers to call and offer to fill the hole in coverage left by GTA/IV...

PS3 PS2 PSP

NOOOOOOOOOOOO...

GTA/IV delayed until next year



■ "Merry Christmas and a crappy New Year..."

In what could be the worst piece of gaming news since the PS3 delay, Rockstar has recently announced that *Grand Theft Auto IV* will not make its October 19 deadline. In fact, it won't even be released this year, with most experts speculating a vague Q2 2008 release, possibly March.

But kids! Please! Wrestle the Stanley knife away from thy wrists, and unhook thy neck from that noose. There are plenty of good acceptable reasons for the delay, as Rockstar itself has testified.

"Certain elements of development proved to be more time-intensive than expected," explained chairman of Take-Two, Strauss Zelnick, in a statement before assuring everyone that the game

will undoubtedly be "worth the wait". Executive producer Sam Houser echoed this sentiment: "Every aspect of the game and its design has been completely transformed... As always, our goal is to surpass even the wildest expectations of the game's fans, and to create the ultimate high definition videogame experience."

We're sure you'd agree that its best to wait for a more complete, perfected next gen *GTA* experience than a rushed, half arsed one. Plus, with the list of must have PS3 titles expanding fast, we're pretty sure you won't be short of something to play this Christmas.



WHAT THEY SAID...

"When you've got a competitor like Take-Two on the sports side, and they launch a football title... you want to make sure that ends up being a blip and is not repeatable..."

EA's John Riccitiello. Maybe they could just improve *Madden* instead of trying to BUY football.

"The worst thing I ever did? Super Mario Brothers. It was a f--kin' nightmare."

Bob Hoskins. Videogame movies: shit to watch OR be in. Go figure.

"Tekken sucks."

DOA creator Tomonobu Itagaki. In other news, Colonel Sanders hates Big Macs.

"When we got the news, we immediately and vigorously polished off several crates of champagne."

Alex Rigopolos, CEO of Harmonix, after *Rock Band* won E3 Best of Show. Replace champagne with Sixpoint Sweet Action and it sounds a lot cooler.

"The new Resident Evil video game depicts a white man in what appears to be Africa killing Black people. The Black people are supposed to be zombies and the white man's job is to destroy them and save humanity."

Kym Platt on blog BlackLooks thinks *RE5* is racist (she's the one who capitalises black and not white). Being set in Africa the skin colour of the zombies isn't exactly surprising. Perhaps strictly Chinese zombies in Africa would suit Kym. Or maybe Capcom should only ever use white zombies. Kym agrees.

"Yes... I am more comfortable with the zombies being white. In fact, ALL zombies should be white from this day forth." Case closed.

GIVEAWAY

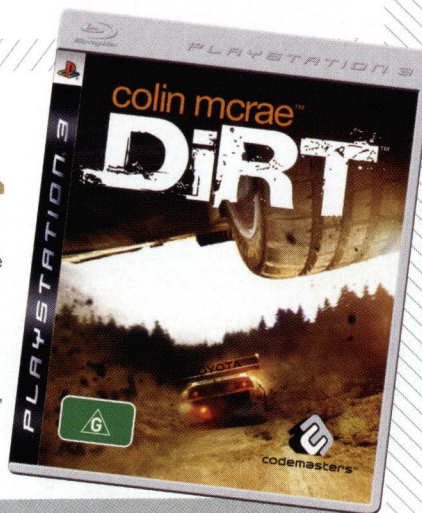
DISHING THE DIRT

We've written so much about the latest instalment of the stellar *Colin McRae* franchise that we've actually ran out of ways to make fun of its bizarre moniker, *DIRT*. Thankfully the game has just been released, so we won't have to scratch our heads for any more *DIRT* punnage for at least a couple of months. Now we can just spend our spare time playing it.

For those still hankering for more info on Codemasters latest racer, however, head across to page 74 for our verdict. In a nutshell we think the game is awesome, and well worth splooging your hard earned dollars

upon – but if you happen to be super poor, or tighter than a badger's ass, we have a solution for you: enter our *Colin McRae: DIRT* competition and get the game for free!

As always all you have to do is answer one simple question and send the entry to us marked 'DIRT giveaway' following the instructions on page 16. Go for it!



Question:

Colin McRae won the World Rally Championship in which year?

- A. 1871
- B. 2006
- C. 1995

WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S NOT...

MGS4

Rad, crotch-grabbing trailer – drool...



HEAVENLY SWORD

Crotch-grabbing for an entirely different reason.



UT3

Smokin'. *Gears of War*, eat your heart out!



PS3

No price drop, just free games instead. Sigh...



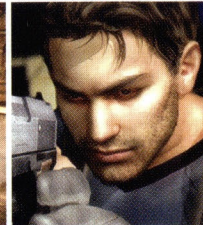
LAIR

Wasn't this game supposed to be good?



RESIDENT EVIL 5

Did you know this isn't due until 2009?!



GTA/IV

Delayed until early next year. Son of a...



HOT!

NOT!

INFO NUDGE

Everything else that's fit to print (and some that's not)



PSP 2000

Word to Sony, while we love the smaller, lighter, more efficient PSP, we are certainly not digging the new moniker. 2000? That number is no longer cool. It was only cool back in the '60s when that year was in the future. Hello?! It's the year 2007, 2000 is now in the past, hence shit. Now that we've got that rant over, we would like to announce that the new PSP will be available sometime in the first week of September, so roughly about the time you're reading this magazine. It will come in white and piano black.

WE COULD BE HEROES...



Fans of the sometimes awesome TV show *Heroes* rejoice, producer Tim Kring has recently announced that Ubisoft will be handling the creation of a licensed videogame based on the popular series. We have one simple question: will Claire the cheerleader be playable and will she have a 'get naked' option? Yeah, obviously not – we're stupid. Just ignore us. No real concrete details on the game as of now, but we'll let you know when we get them.

LOST



Yep, and while we're on the whole TV game vibe, Ubisoft has also been working on a previously announced videogame based on the ever confusing *Lost*. A new trailer for the game has recently been released revealing that, as you'd expect, the game is a third-person action game with some puzzle elements thrown in for some good measure. Since *Lost* lives and dies by its portrayal of mystery and the combustible character combinations, we're curious to see how Ubisoft will attempt to translate this across to the videogame realm.

MORE THAN A FEELING



Sony has announced another entry in the ever-expanding *SingStar* series – *SingStar Rock Ballads*. A daggy mix of shopping centre radio and the *GTA: Vice City* soundtrack, *Rock Ballads* boast cuts from Cutting Crew, Meatloaf, Mr Mister, Boston and Toto. A separate *SingStar* title, *SingStar Amped* (featuring the likes of Pearl Jam, Alice in Chains, Foo Fighters, ZZ Top and Stone Temple Pilots) is currently scheduled for a North American release only, but the tracks may be available to download for *SingStar* on PS3.

TEKKEN TOURNAMENT



Who is this guy to our left? Well this, ladies and gents, is Josh Incoli, the iron-fisted winner of Australia's most recent 'DragonBeast Tekken Tournament'. If you think you've got what it takes and would like to enter the next tournee, contact dragonbeastprojects@hotmail.com for details.



GIVEAWAY

'BIRD' WATCHING

Disturbia is all about checking out people with binoculars, and do you know what? That's totally cool with us. Binoculars are fun – there's no denying it. Whether you're trying to catch your hot neighbour in the buff, or turning the 'binos' round the wrong way to make everything look small, or pulling out the old ink rings round the eyes trick, there's plenty of joy to be extracted from the old 'bins'.

In *Disturbia* however, the whole binocular thing becomes slightly more sinister. Convinced that there is a serial killer living next door, teenager Kale (played by in-demand Shia LeBeouf) starts to obsess. Is the whole thing a figment of his fertile imagination, or is something more ominous afoot? Well to find out, all you have to do is enter our competition as we have ten *Disturbia* packs containing the movie itself and a pair of binoculars. All you have to do is answer this simple question and send it to us marked 'Disturbia giveaway' following the instructions below.

Question: What high profile sequel is *Disturbia* star Shia LeBeouf currently in the process of shooting?

- A Indiana Jones 4
- B Lord of the Rings 4: Gollum's European Vacation
- C Star Wars Episode 7: Jar Jar Saves Christmas

HOW TO ENTER

Send entries to ops@derwenthoward.com.au with the name of the competition in the subject line, or post them to OPS Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355 with the name of the competition CLEARLY MARKED on the envelope. Alternatively head to www.gameplayer.com.au and enter all promos there. Include the name of the competition, your name, age, email address, contact number, and more importantly, your full address and postcode! All competitions close on October 9. All competitions are open to residents of Australia and New Zealand.

GIVEAWAY

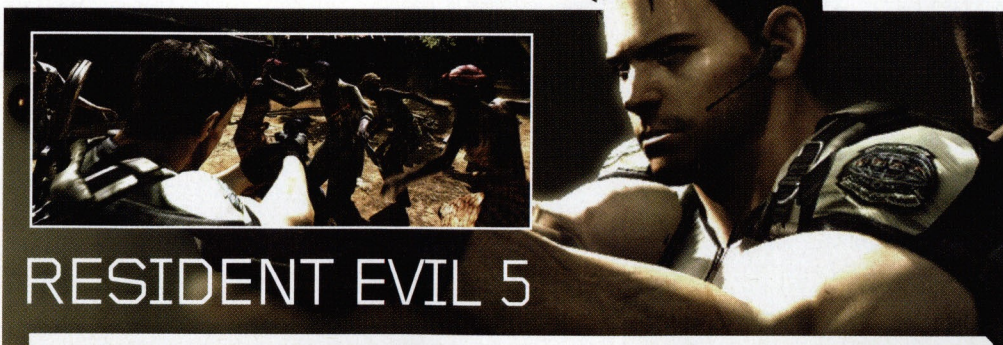
BEST PRIZE EVER

Do you love playing videogames? Ever given thought to the idea of doing it for a living? Well, courtesy of GamePlayer, we are giving one lucky reader the chance to kickstart his or her journalism career on the hallowed pages of this very magazine. As part of this prize we will fly you up to the legendary Derwent Howard offices (home of OPS) giving you the chance to play numerous new unreleased PlayStation 3 games and have your very own game review published in the mag.

This really is a once in a lifetime competition so we implore you to give it a whirl. Here's how you can win: first visit www.gameplayer.com.au and head to the PS3 section. Hidden amongst the screenshots there will be pics of Naz, Luke, Mark and even Phill (if he doesn't break the camera) holding up single letters on a piece of paper. But here is the catch; the letters we are holding up can be arranged to spell out the title of an upcoming PS3 game.

Once you've combed all the pages, rearranged the letters and have the answer, enter it into the relevant section of GamePlayer's PS3 section and wait to hear from us. Entries are open until October 9.

Good luck everybody!



RESIDENT EVIL 5

Although we saw a tiny snippet of *Resident Evil 5* at E3, it was an ultimately unsatisfactory glimpse into one of the most anticipated games this generation. Thankfully Capcom had the wherewithal to release a more substantial trailer, and trust us when we say: it looked so good that our brains started dribbling out of our ears.

If you have access to the PlayStation Store then take our advice, head there this very minute and download the thing. We're serious, throw this magazine on the floor RIGHT NOW and start downloading, don't let anything

stop you – clothesline grandma if you have to. We were able to glean these nuggets of info.

The game appears to be set in Africa, due to the fact that all the zombies in question are black. Playing as a super buff Chris Redfield, supposedly 10 years after the events of the original *Resident Evil*, RE5 is said to have a *Black Hawk Down* feel, with added zombies of course. At the end of the trailer a vague female character makes an appearance, but it's impossible to say at this point whether she is familiar to the series, or a complete unknown.

Other things we noticed: the game appears to take the same 'over the shoulder' camera view as RE4, graphically it looks better than any game we've seen thus far, the number of zombies on-screen has increased to a huge extent, and you now have the ability to punch zombies in the face. Yes, you read correctly. You can now punch zombies in the face.

Sadly, however, we're in for a bit of a wait with this one. The release date has recently been pushed back, and we've been informed that we probably won't be seeing a release date until 2009.



TAME YOUR FEROCIOUS HUNGER





BIRD'S EYE VIEW

People have been saying some pretty stupid stuff this month. "Stranglehold will be the top selling title this Christmas." That's according to Midway's European managing director Martin Spiess. Hey, we don't have a problem with being optimistic – just being unrealistic. *Stranglehold* is a decent game, but is it going to outsell *Call of Duty 4*? Is it going to outsell *Madden*? Isn't *Madden* second only to Christianity in the US? Activision's Will Kasoy kept the head-scratches coming. "I think some of the early signs we've seen might make [*Rock Band*] a little more complex than some of the things that make *Guitar Hero* so great," he said. Like what? Singing? A drum kit? Optional ones at that. You do know, without the drums and the mic, *Rock Band* IS *Guitar Hero*? "People haven't heard about *Rock Band* yet," he went on. Except for all the people pre-ordering it, of course. And I guess he didn't hear it won game of show at E3. It wasn't all complete verbal diarrhoea though. Joseph Taylor, VP of Panasonic North America, was refreshingly blunt on the HD format war. "I think the battle is over. I think Blu-ray has won," he said. We agree. 300 just became the fastest selling high-def film thus far. 65% percent of copies sold were Blu-ray. Only 35% were HD DVD. It's brand new game *Rage* (for PC, Mac, Xbox 360 and PS3) will require two DVDs for all platforms... except the PS3 – thanks to Blu-ray. Bizarre Creations created a buzz with comments from one employee it can't fit everything it would like to on a DVD for Xbox 360 racer *PGR4* (Bizarre later said the comments had been blown out of proportion – but if *GTA* for PS2 used nearly all the DVD9's space, how much space will *GTA* need?) However, all the while a new study from the NPD group indicates that only 40% of PS3 owners are aware their console plays Blu-ray. So... you know this thing has Blu-ray, right?

Jessica Greene, Games Writer

TOP 10: GAMING BULLCRAP!

1 Mary Poppins pants...

Snake, how the hell did you fit that enormous cardboard box in your pants? And that rocket launcher? How can you still sneak around with all the crap in your pockets? And that goes for you too Tommy Vercetti, Leon Kennedy, Lara Croft and pretty much everyone else in the videogaming universe. Bullcrap!



2 Crate Scott!

Breaking crates is a cliché as old as videogaming itself, but why is there always so much good stuff inside? If you could find guns, ammo, money or food inside every bloody crate in real life could you imagine the consequences? The country would go up in smoke, the world would stand still on its axis, no one would work, no one would do anything except search the entire breadth of the country looking for crates to smash.



3 Metrosexual teenager saves the world (again)

Look man, how a spotty, floppy fringed lady boy, who in all likelihood would get the crap beaten out of them by our gran, could lay the smacketh down upon bigass

monsters and super hard imperial warlords, we'll never know.



4 Inappropriate deaths...

So yeah, you've survived 10 gunshots to the dome, been set on fire twice, blasted by a shotgun in the kidneys, and raped by a werewolf, but due to your ridiculous life bar, you have just been brutally killed because a rat decided to have a nibble on your todger.

5 Miracle food

Yep, you have a bullet in your brain, you just got your balls bitten off by a rabid zombie dog and you have leprosy. Not to worry, drink a little potion, eat a pork chop, or an apple, and voila! You're cured. Man, all those cancer research programmes are just a waste of our time and money: feed the poor bastards some fruit and they'll be as right as rain. Bullcrap!

6 Invisible walls

Imagine running down the street, late for work, in a vain effort to catch the train and BAM! You break your face against an invisible barrier you can't see and, by all physical laws, shouldn't even legitimately exist. Do you feel good about this? Are you entertained? Of course not! Because it's complete and utter bullcrap!

7 Key? We don't need no stinkin' key...

So there's this door see, and you need to get this key. This door is made

of the flimsiest, termite ridden wood ever conceived, and you have an enormous rocket launcher that could evaporate said door. But no, that rocket launcher for some BIZARRE reason, will NOT even SCRATCH said door. You have to get the rusty key on the other side of the level. Yeah, that makes total sense, idiots!

8 Hot females that could kick your ass...

All right, we're in two minds about this one. On one hand, we can't say we hate top heavy female kung fu masters, with their flowing locks, and flawlessly rendered figures, but we have to take a reality check here. How the hell could Chun Li even compete with Sagat, and how the hell can Lara Croft do handstands without choking to death on her mammoth mammaries? Answer: she can't... it's bullcrap.

9 Teleporting items

To be honest, this cliché is pretty much specific to the *Resident Evil* series, but it's still beyond ridiculous. Put your handgun or 'green herb' in some random bloody box and it magically manages to clone itself, and defy every known law of physics by teleporting into another random box on the other side of the building.

10 Non-swimming heroes

You can jump three times your height, absorb 20 bullets without dying, run non-stop for as long as you want, but you can't swim?! In fact, not only can't you swim, but the very minute you touch water you die instantly. Come on! Everyone can swim. The only decent excuse for not being able to swim is being aged between 0 and 5 years old, wheelchair bound, or actually legitimately allergic to water. Otherwise, get in the water and swim, bitch. And that's an order.

GIVEAWAY

A SLICE OF HEAVEN

Well, you already know how much of a hottie Nariko is, so it's probably best not to dwell on that fact for too long. Is it enough to say that she is a pouty little firecracker that we love to watch jiggling all over our screen? We think so. The game is a bit of alright too, and utilises the SIXAXIS motion-sensing in the most expert fashion seen thus far. We've been spending a huge amount of time this month getting to grips with *Heavenly Sword* and that ginger little vixen. We feel that it's only right that you readers also get the chance to spend some time in Nariko's heavenly embrace, and as such we have five copies of *Heavenly Sword* to giveaway this month. As always it is a simple case of answering a simple question and sending it to us marked 'Heavenly Sword giveaway', following the instructions on page 16.

Question: Andy Serkis played a huge role in *Heavenly Sword*'s cut-scenes, but which *Lord of the Rings* character did he famously bring to life?

- A Sam Gamgee
- B Frodo Baggins
- C Gollum

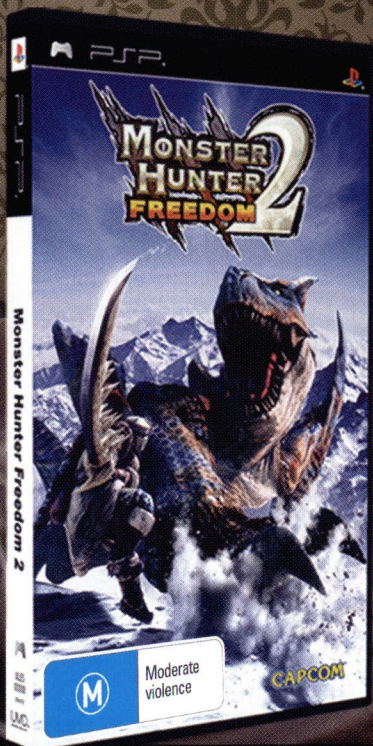


WIN!

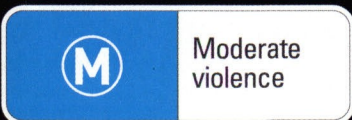
FOUR HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE



MONSTER HUNTING FOR ONE TO FOUR PLAYERS.



MONSTER HUNTER 2 FREEDOM



Released into the wild 12th September



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TOP 10 GAMES CHART



Rank	Title	Category	Distributor
1	MotorStorm		
2	Formula One		
3	Transformers		
4	The Darkness	FPS	2K
5	Rainbow Six Vegas	FPS	Ubisoft
6	Need for Speed Carbon	Racing	EA
7	Fight Night Round 3	Sports	EA
8	Ninja Gaiden Sigma	Action	Atari
9	The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	RPG	Ubisoft
10	Virtua Tennis 3	Sports	THQ

RELEASE SCHEDULE



Format	Title	Category	Distributor
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OCTOBER

PS3	Medal of Honor Airborne	FPS	EA
PS3/PS2	Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock	Rhythm	Activision
PS3	Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	Sports	Activision
PS3	Skate	Sports	EA
PS3	Clive Barker's Jericho	FPS	Atari
PS3	Hei\$et	Action	Atari
PS3	Ratchet & Clank Future: TOD	Adventure	Sony
PS3	Warhawk	Flight sim	Sony
PS2/PSP	Crash of the Titans	Platformer	Sony
PSP	Star Wars Battlefront RS	Action	Activision

NOVEMBER

PS3	Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	Action	Atari
PS3	WWE: SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	Fighting	THQ
PS3	Assassin's Creed	Adventure	Ubisoft
PS3	Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	FPS	Activision
PS3	Need for Speed ProStreet	Racing	EA
PS3	Haze	FPS	Ubisoft
PS3	The Simpsons	Adventure	EA
PS3	Army of Two	Action	EA
PS3	Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway	FPS	Ubisoft
PS3/PS2	Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	Sports	Atari
PSP	Silent Hill Origins	Horror	Atari
PS3	Unreal Tournament 3	FPS	Red Ant



GIVEAWAY



MA 15+ Strong violence
RESTRICTED



WIN!

HHIII-YAAA

To celebrate the DVD release of *The Protector*, OPS magazine readers have the chance to win one of five fantastic Dragon Dynasty DVD prize packs plus a copy of *Ninja Gaiden Sigma* on PS3.

Dragon Dynasty showcases cutting-edge presentations of significant and contemporary Asian Cinema. Digitally re-mastered and presented by Asian film enthusiast, Quentin Tarantino, the first five releases includes the sequel to the highly acclaimed *Ong Bak*, *The Protector*, and kung fu classics *36th Chamber of Shaolin*; *King Boxer*; *My Young Auntie* and *One Armed Swordsman*. Go to www.dragondynasty.com.au for more info on these classic films.

The Protector and other Dragon Dynasty movies are available to buy now in stores, but to win one of five awesome DVD and game packs all you have to do is answer one simple question, and send the answer to us marked 'The Protector giveaway', following the instructions on page 16.

Question: Asian superstar Tony Jaa made his debut in which critically acclaimed martial arts movie?

- A Ong Bak
- B Fist of Legend
- C Rush Hour 3



MYTHBUSTERS

Professional idiots, such as Jack Thompson, openly wept into their lattes as the IEAA (Interactive Entertainment Association of Australia) released findings with hard facts revealing what we knew all along: videogames are not evil purveyors of mindless violence and pornography; and videogames are not responsible for brain dead, drugged up, zombie teenage timebombs. In actual fact, videogaming, given the right circumstances, can actually be a healthy activity.

Can we have an adult videogame rating now please? Hmm... thought not.

In fact while much of the IEAA's findings may have been a predictable yet necessary

mythbusting exercise for people not in the know, some of the stats on display managed to surprise even us. Check some of these out...

The average age of videogamers is, in fact, a surprisingly high 28, but the IEAA expects this number to rise to over 42(!) in the next seven years...

People who play videogames are 6% more likely to play sports than those who don't. Whoa. We didn't see that one coming – stick that in your pipe and smoke it grandad!

In addition, the study showed that videogames do not compete with outdoor leisure activities, but compete instead with television, movies and

music for our leisure time. Man, this study provides teenagers with some serious ammunition, how the hell are parents going to curb gaming time now?

But wait, there's more, even parents seem to be coming round to this new fangled gaming lark. Apparently up to 77% of parents play videogames with their kids and get this: 73% of parents believe games teach kids about technology, 68% believe games teach kids about maths, and 64% believe games teach kids to plan ahead. The study also shows that many parents play games themselves. Whoa... wait a minute... some of them might even be reading this magazine right now. How weird is that? (shudder)

WINNERS

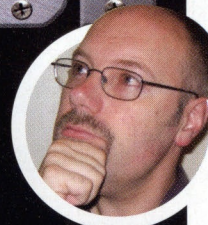
From the comps in OPS #6

Norbit massive HDTV giveaway: T Newbegin. **Stranglehold:** P Bethencourt. **Reeltime:** R Andrew, A Herrington, L Morello, B Brown, P Tapper, T Paladin, M Stewart, J-C Cailleau, J Dekuyer, C Standing. **Hot Fuzz:** C Lim, J Cho, R George, W Clayton, P Burke, H Tisdale, I Donnelly, P Delaney, B Woods, M Sarlo. All other winners notified by phone or email.



GAME DESIGN 101

Say hello to my little friend



Do you have a PSP yet? How about a PS3? It's funny how often things both small and big can mirror each other, and that's particularly the case for Sony's two latest hardware offerings.

Both the PSP and the PS3 are the most powerful machines in their class. Both have extensive internet, multimedia and communications capabilities that leave their rivals eating dust. Both offer high quality movie and music playback. And both are, needless to say, shiny, black and gorgeous.

Both were launched with a great deal of fanfare but, frankly, a too-thin library of quality games. Both endured early claims that they were too expensive, too powerful and just plain too much for their intended audiences. Both were declared certain losers in an increasingly tough marketplace.

Fast forward. The PSP has been out for a while longer than the PS3. How's it sitting now, and what might that suggest for the PS3's future?

The PSP has been selling very well in recently. Its global user base has passed the ten million mark and is steadily climbing. The software library is getting stronger by the month, with both first and third-party titles impressing reviewers and gamers alike. And developers who'd previously shown little interest in the machine are looking at it with new eyes.

Will the PS3 follow a similar path? It already is, good buddy. The software line-up for the holiday season is a major statement of intent – and it'll be followed up by a 2008 line-up that looks set to cause its rivals nothing but heartache and pain. The future is looking bright indeed – unless you're a rival platform-holder.

TALES from EARTHSEA

A GORO MIYAZAKI FILM

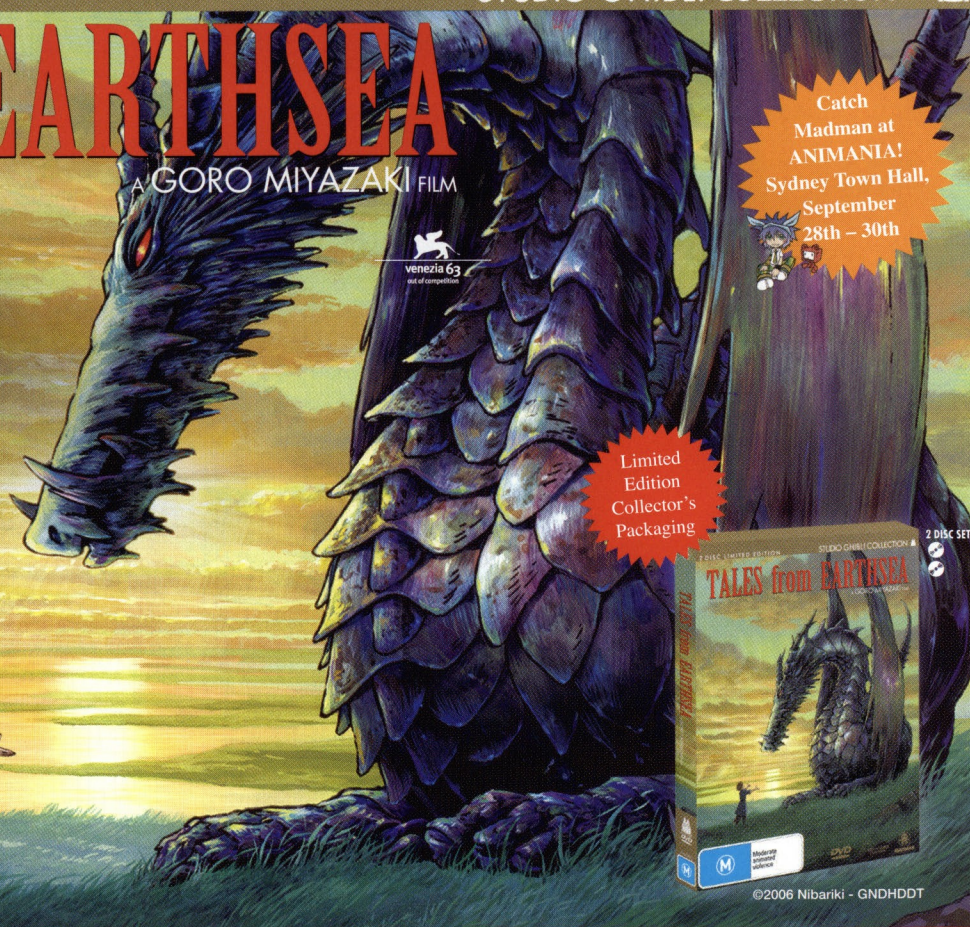
STUDIO GHIBLI COLLECTION



Featuring the voices of:

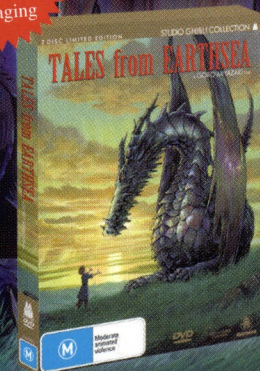
- Timothy Dalton (LICENSE TO KILL, HOT FUZZ)
- Willem Dafoe (SPIDER-MAN, PLATOON)
- Cheech Marin (CARS, GRINDHOUSE)
- Matt Levin (BLADES OF GLORY)
- Mariska Hargitay (LAW AND ORDER, ER)

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and the Academy Award®
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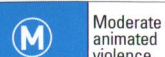


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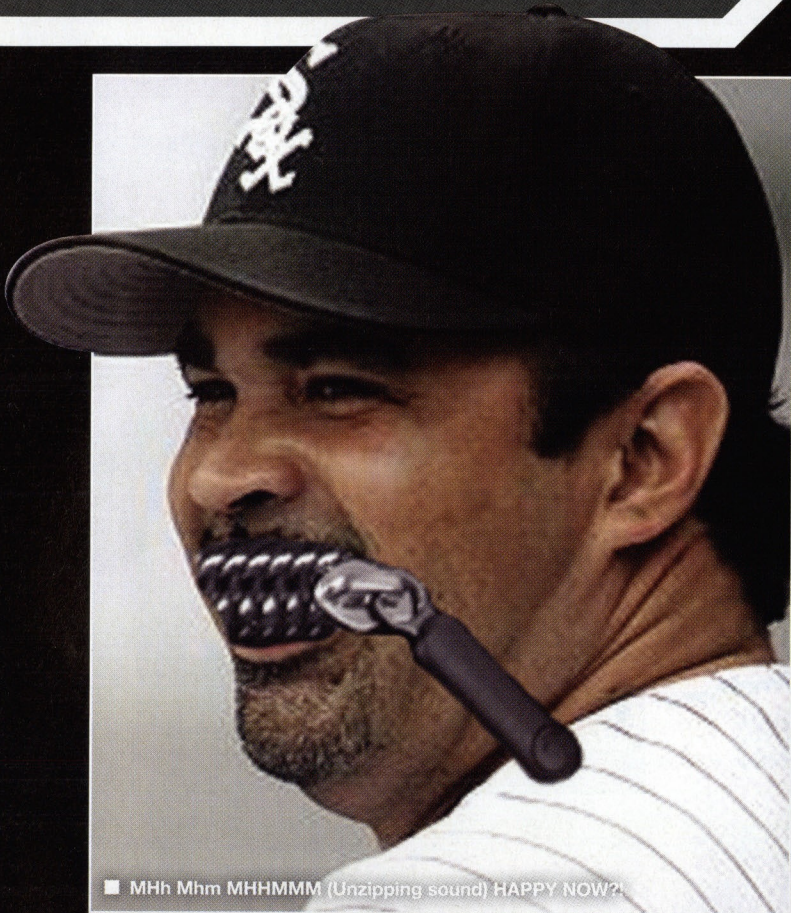
Available Now On DVD!

For more information on Studio Ghibli visit www.madman.com.au



LETTERS

HAVE YOUR SAY AND WIN
HEAVENLY SWORD!



■ MHh Mhm MHHMMM (Unzipping sound) HAPPY NOW?!

LETTER OF THE MONTH

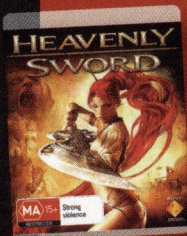
ZIP IT!

I'm writing to say that ever since you guys got that e-mail from "anonymous" in the July edition, the mag has been less funny. Why? The loss of unzipping sound jokes. The e-mail in question stated, and I quote: "THAT STUPID UNZIPPING SOUND JOKE WASN'T FUNNY." End quote. Well, I'm writing to say, also quote: "Bullshit, complete and utter." Me and my friends used to sit around for hours, pointing out the unzipping sounds and the "Paul is gay" jokes. We would laugh for hours. But where did they go? Just because Paul went off to live in retirement with his forty-seven wives and for some reason no children, doesn't mean you shouldn't stop laughing at him and his sister. In fact you should laugh at him more, making up more stupid things. Like I just did.

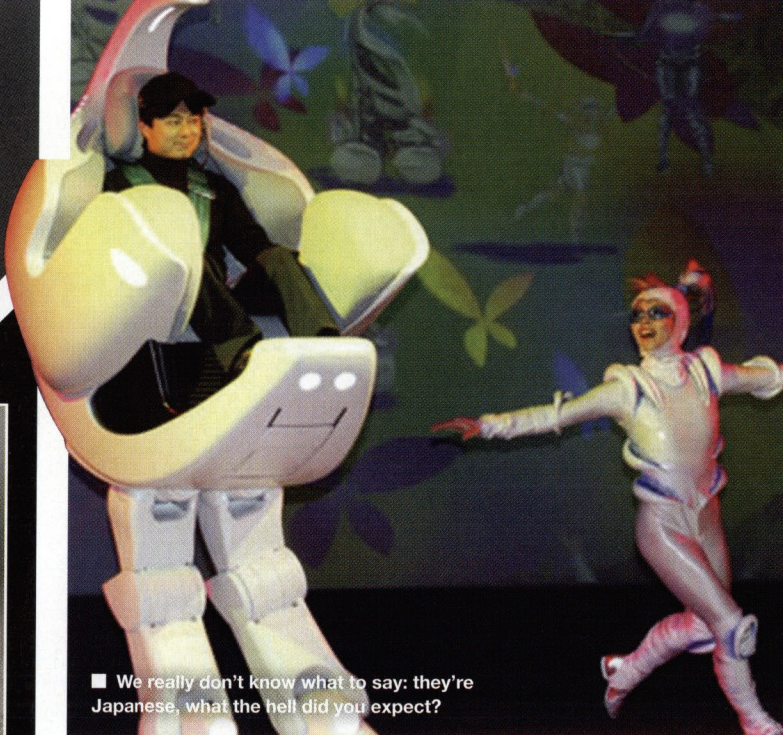
Julian Loader, NSW

All right, all right, what is it with you guys?! One month you like the unzipping captions, the next you hate them. Here's our deal: if we look at a screen and an unzipping sound caption immediately springs to mind, we'll run with it! If it doesn't we're not going to spend the whole day trying to find a way to squeeze it in there. And as for the Paul jokes, he's not here to defend himself so we'll have to find someone else to pick on (looks around office...) Um, well... Narayan's the boss, so we can't rag on him... Luke is really tall and has that silent, menacing thing going on... and Mark's got a gruff Scottish accent that makes him sound like Groundskeeper Willie on steroids (especially when he loses at Resistance). That's pretty much it. It's a tough job finding a new office bitch.

WINNER!



Letter of the month wins a copy of the heavenly *Heavenly Sword* thanks to those swingers at Sony!



■ We really don't know what to say; they're Japanese, what the hell did you expect?

THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT...

Hey OPS team, I just wanted to let you know that I have been reading your magazine for as long as I can remember. Yes, even in the days before our beloved PS3, and our terrific PS2, all the way back to the old and gold PSone. You know... the days when a playable demo of *Metal Gear Solid* was on the disc, or even before that, a glimpse at a trailer (gasp) of... *Abe's Oddysee*! Yep, those were the days. But no, I'm not writing to you to talk about the past (or Narayan's dodgy haircut), I'm writing in with a question that many of us game freaks have on our minds... what is going to happen in the future of gaming? Now that the PS3 has invaded our shores amid welcome arms, will there be more to come? Are we going to have PS4 or even a PS5? The gaming we have today is the amazing but I often wonder, apart from the AI, are game developers going to be able to keep making new and improved games, or are they going to be making the same old FPS with twenty new guns and ten more levels with 65% more walking space!

Kye, via email

Thanks for the history lesson Kye: *Abe's Oddysee*? Man, you have been around for a while. As for gaming in the future, it's kind of hard to say how the landscape of gaming will evolve in the years to come. We're pretty sure that a PS4 or even PS5 will exist in some shape or form? How about a microchip that implants directly into your brain? Or a console that comes in pill form? Or maybe it will just run on super huge 20160p TVs with graphics that actually melt your face? Who knows? We can't wait to find out.

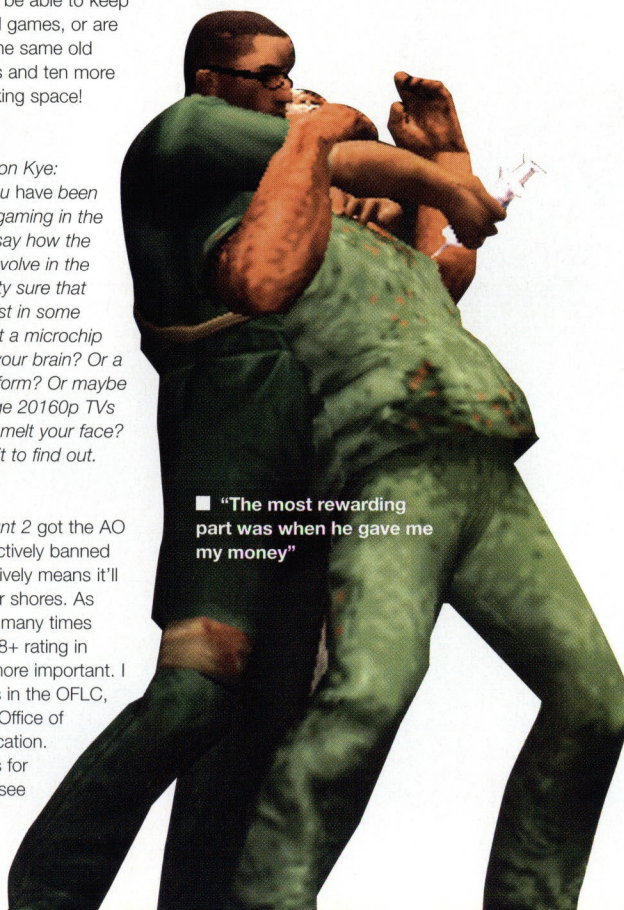
BANNED!

In June last month, *Manhunt 2* got the AO rating and the UK has effectively banned it from Britain, which effectively means it'll never get even close to our shores. As reported in your magazine many times before, the need for an R18+ rating in Australia has never been more important. I think part of the problem is in the OFLC, starting with its name, the Office of Film and Literature Classification. Videogames match movies for revenue nowadays and to see

the lack of acknowledgement within the name of our classification body is perhaps a reason why they aren't taken seriously. Our metaphorical little brother NZ has it; why don't we?

Ameer Sabri, QLD

Yep, we couldn't agree more with regards to the R18+ rating situation, although, as we've tried to make clear, the OFLC isn't the problem – the legislation is, and getting it changed isn't easy. We have to say however that, in the case of *Manhunt 2*, such a rating would probably have made little difference. The UK has such an adult rating for games, and it still wasn't sufficient enough to see the game past their censors. There's still hope however: *Rockstar* seems to have reluctantly agreed to make some changes to the game in the hope of seeing it released in both the UK and Australia. Fingers crossed.



■ "The most rewarding part was when he gave me my money"



■ After leaving OPS, Tristan Ogilvie hit rock bottom. That's hard times, daddy...

THE UNLUCKY COUNTRY

I think it's disgraceful that the PS3 is US\$499 (A\$581.71), A good \$400 bucks cheaper than here. I understand that the PS3 has been out longer in the US, but I think we deserve a reward for the extra wait, yet we just get shitted on with crap backwards compatibility, while Americans enjoy their cheap-ass PS3s, with full backwards compatibility: less price for a better system. It's like Sony is screwing our girlfriends and making us watch. I also heard today that an 80GB model is being released for US\$599 (A\$698.542) soon. It's like Sony are now screwing all our ex-girlfriends as well. And filming it. And making us watch it over and over and over again. I was also wondering if an American PS3 (NTSC) would play Aussie (PAL) games, as I am going to the US in September/October. Although with the price in the US I could still buy just one game with it and it would be worth it.

Andrew Pringle, via email

We understand what you're going through, We came back from E3 absolutely fizzing that Australia wasn't going to get a piece of the price cut pie. We would like to confirm to you, however, that all PS3 games are region free, as are most Blu-ray films. You will encounter a problem when playing Aussie PS2 games or Aussie DVDs though, because these remain region coded. If you can withstand these minor blows, buying a US PS3 is a relatively painless experience.

HISTORY LESSON...

Love the mag guys. As an older gamer (38) I just wanted to express a view that seems to have been overlooked by a large number of commentators when they are talking about Sony and its new wonder machine. I'm talking about the old days of VCR. Back then we had two choices BETAMAX or VHS. Beta had smaller tapes, and better sound/video quality while VHS had the backing of the movie studios. So,

long story short Sony lost, people bought the machine that allowed them to rent the movies they wanted to see. This lesson did not escape Sony – look at it now. It owns music companies and movie studios to compliment its new tech. It's for this reason (among others) that I will be buying a PS3 as soon as the new "starter pack" becomes available (apparently August 2). Sony knows its stuff. PS3 = bring on the fun for at least a decade. Thanks for putting up with my rant.

Jimi, via email

You make some good points Jimi, especially for those of us old enough to remember what the hell Betamax was! But you're right: it seems like Sony has totally learned from the experience. At this stage it seems like Blu-ray is almost certainly going to be the victor in the next generation format wars, which works out well for both Sony and the PlayStation 3.

SPEAK TO US

Love the new mag? Hate the new mag? We want your opinions and questions on OPS, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

OPS Feedback
Derwent Howard
PO Box 1037
Bondi Junction, NSW 1355
ops@derwenthoward.com.au

CUTTINGS

Delicious bite-sized letter morsels that are easy to swallow

A DREAM COME TRUE

Will there be a third *God of War*? P.S Can you please put this in the cutting section.

Jason Botica, via email

Hey Jason, congrats you made it to the cutting section! And yes, there will be a *God of War III*, guaranteed.

HALT!

Is it just me, or has the release of the PS3 caused an almost complete stop in new PS2 games?

Harley, via email

There's no doubt that the amount of PS2 releases is decreasing, but with 160 games on the way, it's hardly dead and buried. It's just you.

GLOBAL WARMING

Does the PS3 have the power to stop global warming?

Mark Fox

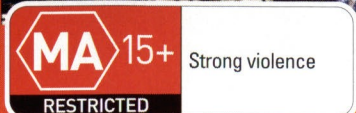
Well, the PS3 has been busy helping cure cancer, playing hi-res movies and running videogames, but maybe we should give Al Gore a buzz.

"Sprawling... apocalyptic... a cult classic" Cine East

DEVILMAN



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PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** STEALTH-ACTION
■ **PLAYERS:** 1
■ **RELEASE:** MARCH 2008
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ATARI
■ **DEVELOPER:** KONAMI
■ **WEB:** www.konami.jp/kojima_pro



METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

“Snake? What happened Snake? SNAAAAAAKE...”

This year's E3 was truly a time for PlayStation 3 owners to lean back, crack a cocky grin, and whisper a smug, “I told you so” into the ears of cynical non-believers. The games on display in Sony's camp obliterated the competition, leaving everyone for dead and reversing over the corpses. In a time where loyalty is forgotten, and publishers seem intent on dragging games multiformat, to hell with the consequences, it will be the elusive exclusives that decide the console wars this time round. If that's the case, then it's

pretty safe to say that Sony has a strong hand in the coming war.

Uncharted, *Final Fantasy XIII*, *LittleBigPlanet*, *Haze*, *Heavenly Sword*, *WarHawk* the list goes on... it's safe to say that the PS3 has a healthy future, but the mack daddy, the ace in the hole, the game that ultimately has the potential to single-handedly secure Sony's victory is the sublime *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots*. Here is the game that will render all others obsolete, the game that will make your pants quiver, the game that you can look upon with pride and

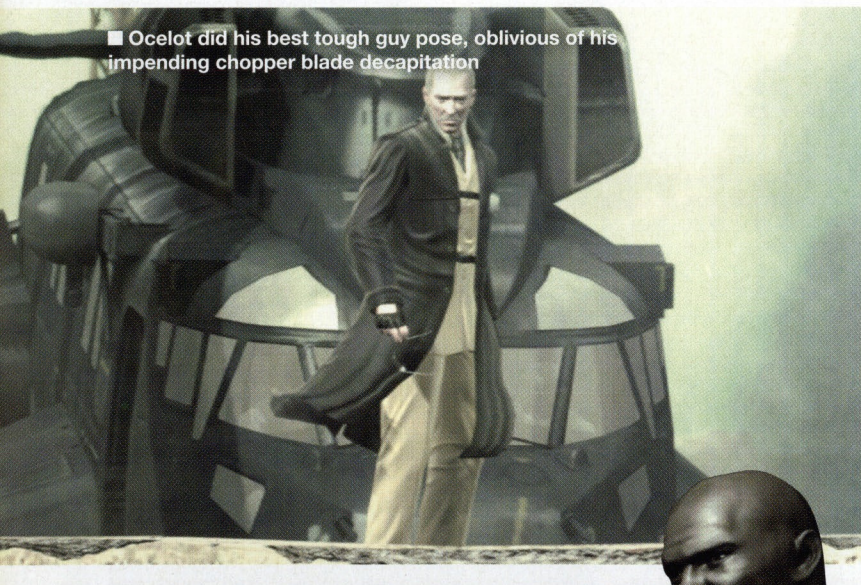
say this... “This is why I bought a PlayStation 3.”

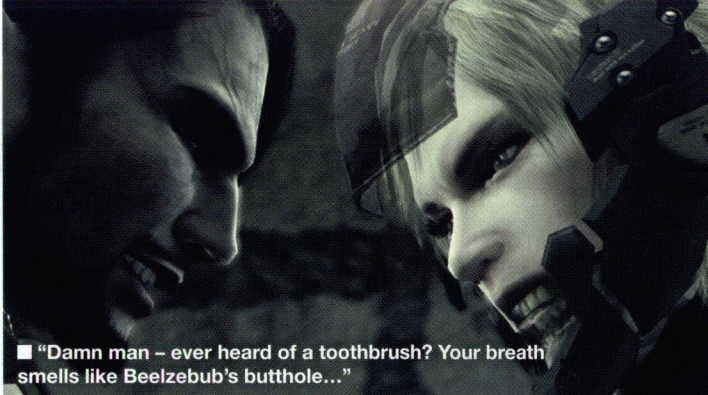
OOOH... THAT WAS A BIT DRAMATIC...

Well, can you blame us? After watching one of the greatest trailers in history at E3, it took all our energy to keep from spontaneously combusting on the spot. For those who haven't yet seen the trailer, you're missing out. Textures, character models and all those fancy effects you've been reading about have been ramped up considerably, rendering *MGS4* one of the

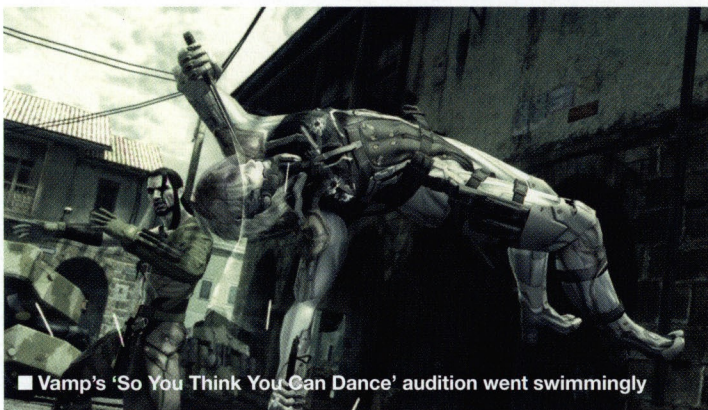


■ Ocelot did his best tough guy pose, oblivious of his impending chopper blade decapitation





■ "Damn man – ever heard of a toothbrush? Your breath smells like Beelzebub's butthole..."



■ Vamp's 'So You Think You Can Dance' audition went swimmingly

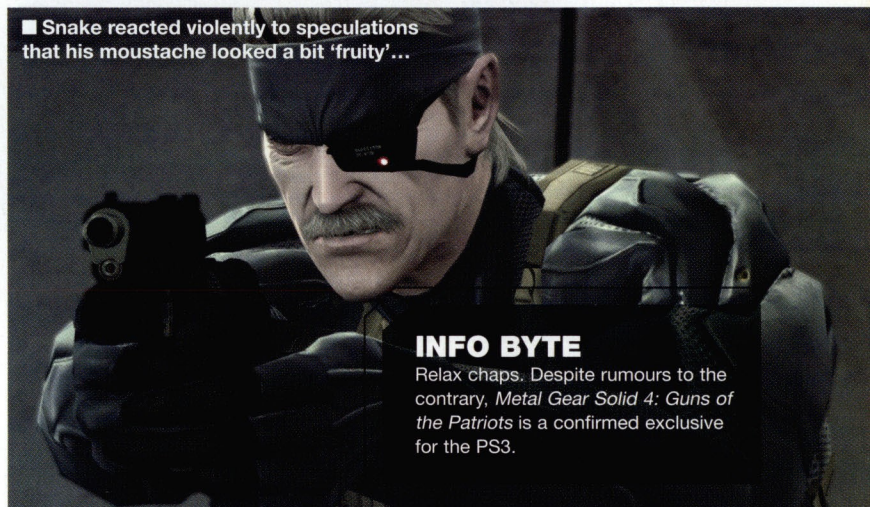


■ "Um, Jenny? Your boobs feel a bit weird..." "Wait till you get into my pants. Surprise numbnuts, I'm a MAN"

"Reports are universally stating one thing: hold onto your pants, and empty your bowels in advance kids – this one's going to get crazy."



■ Jeff's outfit was 'unconventional', but understandable in light of his awe-inspiring chest hair...



■ Snake reacted violently to speculations that his moustache looked a bit 'fruity'...

INFO BYTE

Relax chaps. Despite rumours to the contrary, *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots* is a confirmed exclusive for the PS3.

best looking games at the show.

But of course *Metal Gear* wouldn't be *Metal Gear* without a ridiculously protracted plotline, and from the new info we've gleaned it looks like *Guns of the Patriots* will not disappoint. While Snake's ultimate goal seems to be the assassination of the dastardly Liquid/Ocelot genetic freak combo, this is complicated by the fact that said villain is in possession of a device that can control and ultimately kill anyone infected with the 'FOX DIE' virus. Veterans of the series will of course know that Solid Snake himself was one of the first to be infected with the virus in the original *Metal Gear Solid*.

It should make for an unnecessarily complicated story that will make our collective brains ache with guilty pleasure, but that's Kojima for you! And we feel *MGS* wouldn't be the same without it

BUT WAIT... THERE'S MORE!

Post E3, in Tokyo, Kojima finally got round to showing off some *Metal Gear Solid 4* gameplay, and reports are universally stating one thing: hold onto your pants, and empty your bowels in advance kids – this one's going to get crazy.

First off, all the little gameplay nuggets hinted at in previous real time demos, have been implemented fully. The idea of a real time battlefield where Snake

can switch sides depending on what furthers the mission has been realised. In the case of the demo, Snake had to help out the rebels in a skirmish with Liquid's private army, but in other parts of the game it's possible you may have to switch allegiances to effectively achieve your goals.

Kojima also demonstrated the octo-cam, a camouflage suit featuring the ability to adapt to your environment. When Snake remained stationary in a hiding position, for example, he can make like a chameleon, as his suit will morph to match the colour and texture of his surroundings. This makes it easier to remain hidden in a more open environment, but also renders *MGS4* that little bit more believable. Previously the series has always required a suspension of disbelief, considering that the supposedly 'highly trained soldiers' couldn't spot Snake pimped out in neon lycra if he was more than four yards away. With octo-cam, *MGS*'s Stevie Wonder-esque enemies are more convincing.

LEAVE STEVIE OUT OF THIS!

And despite the fact that the perennial *MGS* cardboard box has been relegated to the annals of history, Kojima has insured that there will be many more interesting ways to disguise yourself.

For example, we thoroughly enjoyed Kojima's attempt to hide under a barrel, before using the barrel to roll down a hill and knock out some enemies. Our favourite, however was the slightly more sophisticated statue-cam.

Remember that slightly risque moment in the previous trailer, when Snake disguised himself as a Roman statue and gently cupped the testicles of the adjacent statue? Well, that can actually be done in game via the statue-cam. It's a creative feature, and one that reassures gamers that the *MGS* hasn't lost its penchant for the bizarre. WTF moments ahoy!

And instead of the heinous delayed release we Aussies had to endure last time round, Konami has promised us a simultaneous release, meaning that for once we should be settling down to play this masterpiece at the same time as the rest of the world.

Roll on 2008. **Mark Serrels**

WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "The new trailer shows just how advanced the game is, and the sheer realism and genius we have come to expect from the *Metal Gear Solid* team."

WHAT WE SAY:

■ Game of 2008?

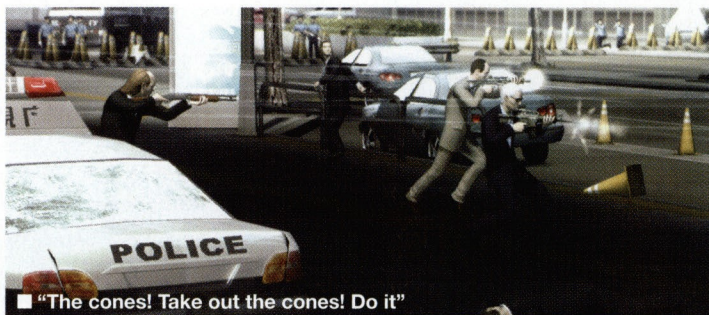
GARBAGE DAY!

In *MGS4* Snake also has the ability to hide out in garbage cans. This in itself sounds fun as hell, but in keeping with the in-depth nature of the series, rummaging amongst the trash has its consequences. Hang out in the bin too long, and you'll smell like Oscar the Grouch; this will cause enemies to get a whiff of your delicious fragrance and hunt you down more effectively. Flies will swarm around your skankin' frame, but players can swat them down using SIXAXIS motion sensing.



PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-8
■ **RELEASE:** NOVEMBER 2007
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ATARI
■ **DEVELOPER:** IO INTERACTIVE
■ **WEB:** www.kaneandlynch.com



■ "The cones! Take out the cones! Do it!"



■ "You're surrounded. Come out with your hands up. And a chilli dog. I skipped breakfast"

INFO BYTE

In addition to co-op play, *Kane & Lynch* will also feature multiplayer levels based on the game's themes for up to eight players. IO is still keeping the details under wraps at this stage.



■ "Fire boys!" But sir, the hostages!" "The what?"

KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN

Dead men tell *great* tales...

One's an ex-mercenary. The other is a medicated psychopath. Fate just made them partners, but that doesn't mean they have to like it.

Or each other.

If it sounds like we've just paraphrased the trailer to a potential Hollywood blockbuster, you're half right. It does sound like the premise for a film.

But it's not.

Kane & Lynch: Dead Men will be a highly cinematic crime thriller from the studio that brought us both the *Hitman* series and the cult darling, *Freedom Fighters*. A mix of single-player, co-op and squad-based combat (you'll be able to lead up to eight henchmen and order them around with simple and intuitive one-button controls that, at this point, look almost identical to the incredibly easy to master squad controls of *Freedom Fighters*) *Kane & Lynch* will be a mature and gritty epic. Sprung from death row, the unlikely (and unstable) duo have one chance to rebuild a fortune lost by Kane's former employers during a botched heist – Kane's last. If Kane wants to save his wife and daughter (currently held hostage

by his old crew) and Lynch wants, presumably, to save himself, they'll need to work together.

Kane & Lynch adds a variety of new tweaks to the already entirely playable, and immensely enjoyable, *Freedom Fighters* mould – like the ability to seek cover and blindfire to suppress enemies. The most welcome addition, however, is two-player co-op. During single-player you'll control Kane, and you'll need to deal with Lynch's severe schizophrenia jeopardising your objectives. With a friend, however, you'll both assume the roles of the titular characters. On the bigger jobs you'll even be able to split control of your team. Interestingly, it appears Kane and Lynch will see the world differently, so it would seem Lynch's condition will affect what player two sees and, we guess, does.



In a completely undisguised nod to *Collateral*, one level is set within a pulsating nightclub – complete with strobing lights, pounding music and over 900 revellers inside, all of whom are aware of your presence. You'll need to kidnap a target and bust your way out of this highly interactive environment.

Another mission we saw unfold was a Tokyo high-rise break-in. You'll need to make your way up the helipad on top dressed as window cleaners, finding your way past the guards before rappelling down the side of the building. When you reach the right floor you'll have to plant a charge on the large window, blow it and storm the boardroom inside. Once you succeed the plan is to walk out of the lobby in civilian clothes. However, things won't go as planned and you'll

find yourself in the middle of a large scale running gunfight in the streets of Tokyo – a skirmish that positively smacks of the cop 'n robbers standoff in *Heat*.

One of the more unique things about Kane and Lynch is that the pair are anti-heroes to the very core. Kane may have a little more finesse than the borderline out-of-control Lynch, but the fact remains that they are two unrepentant thugs who place themselves and their own ambitions above all else. We can't speak for certain until we've had far more time with the game, but we're pretty sure we're not even supposed to like them – which, if true, is actually quite refreshing. IO doesn't need to provide justification for the actions its characters when there's no heart of gold deep inside – take away any sympathetic qualities

and you have your explanation. Kane's broken family back-story and apparent concern for the welfare of his wife and daughter could be construed as trace evidence of a glimmer of light in his blackened soul, but Lynch is a prick. A selfish and sadistic prick. Like it or not, you're stuck with him.

We can't wait. **▀ Luke Reilly**

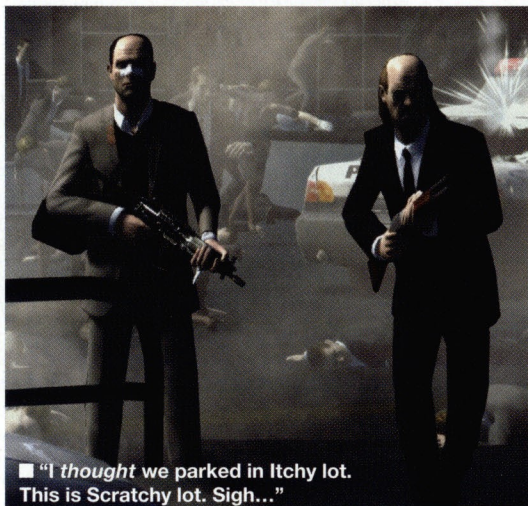
WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "Kane & Lynch will immerse players into an emotionally intense crime drama with unflinching action."

WHAT WE SAY:

■ The spiritual successor to *Freedom Fighters*, this is the game we've wanted for a LONG time.

■ They don't accept cash (they're EFTPOS only guys)



■ "I thought we parked in Itchy lot. This is Scratchy lot. Sigh..."

INSPIRATIONAL

The very concept of *Kane & Lynch* sounds more like a movie pitch than a game – but it's no accident. Jens-Peter Kurup, game director at IO Interactive, talking to www.1up.com, agrees.

"I think the concept looks movie like because we started out looking at the characters and decided, that we wouldn't do a game, or a level, or an action sequence that didn't matter to the main characters." Kurup goes on to mention that the team has also been partly inspired by films like *Heat*, *Collateral* and *Man on Fire*. Nods to *Dog Day Afternoon* and *Cohen & Tate* are obvious, and even the bandage over Kane's nose is a sly reference to *Chinatown*.





Haruhi Suzumiya

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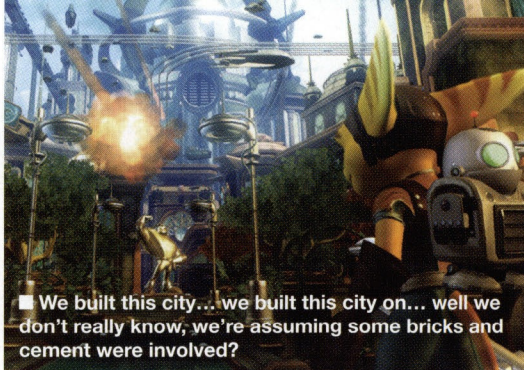




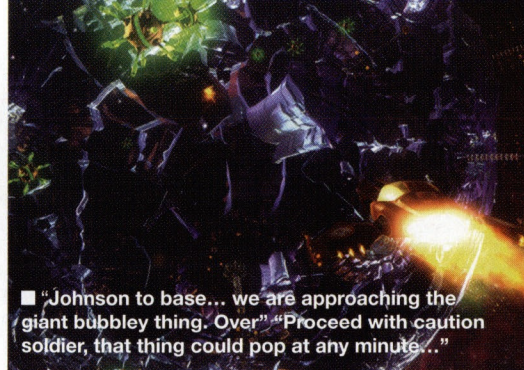
www.madman.com.au

PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** PLATFORMER
■ **PLAYERS:** TBC
■ **RELEASE:** NOVEMBER 2007
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY
■ **DEVELOPER:** INSOMNIAC
■ **WEB:** www.insomniacgames.com



■ "We built this city... we built this city on... well we don't really know, we're assuming some bricks and cement were involved?"



■ "Johnson to base... we are approaching the giant bubbley thing. Over" "Proceed with caution soldier, that thing could pop at any minute..."

RATCHET & CLANK FUTURE: TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION

Weapons of mass destruction...

With the enormous amount of gaming quality pushing its way onto the shores of OPS this holiday season, there's been a slight air of panic in the office of late. The problem, you see, is time. After a slight drought of quality releases, it seems as if PS3 gamers have a new problem to contend with: finding enough hours in the day to plough through all the outstanding games set for release this Christmas.

It worries us, because top quality AAA titles such as *Ratchet & Clank* could very well get lost in the *Assassin's Creed*, *Call of Duty 4*, *Heavenly Sword* mix, and that would be a very grim outcome indeed. This problem has only exacerbated after our most recent chance to test out

Insomniac's latest entry into what has almost become the PlayStation's unofficial flagship platform series. Needless to say we came away lustin' after some more of that tasty Lombax goodness.

Firing up the demo we were immediately struck by the look of the game. In the same way that kids CGI movies always seem to look sharper than their real world counterparts when making the transition to HD, *Ratchet & Clank Future*, even in 720p, looks absolutely fantastic. The art style, in addition to Insomniac's knowledge of the hardware (it is the studio's second PS3 game after all – *Resistance* being the first), creates a genuinely vibrant game world that surprises not only visually, but also in the

sheer scope of the gaming world itself.

Sci-fi classic *The Fifth Element* is obviously an influence here. Atop the enormous skyscrapers that dominate the skyline it's impossible to see where these prodigious buildings end and begin. This, in addition to a gorgeously animated background in which everything – cars, people, enemies – is constantly moving creates a gaming universe that really manages to convince gamers they've been placed slap bang in the middle of an intergalactic metropolis.

And this city is your personal playground. Besides hopping around this environment like a parkour master, players can also partake in a bit of freelance skydiving. In another hint towards *The Fifth Element*, one section of *Tools of Destruction* had us frantically falling through the city without a parachute, utilising SIXAXIS controls in an attempt to avoid the oncoming traffic from below.

Another standout scene has you 'Tony Hawking' your way across train

lines, frantically grinding through tunnels, jumping from track to track in an attempt to avoid the rapidly approaching high speed trains. At the moment the pacing of the whole scene is perhaps a little slower than we would have liked for what is supposed to be an adrenalin fuelled chase, but the idea is there, and it looks nothing short of spectacular.

And to be completely honest, spectacular is pretty much the word that sums up the entire demo thus far; we were left frothing at the mouth for more. Take our advice: keep an eye on this one; don't let it get lost in the mix of PlayStation awesomeness this holiday season. **▀ Mark Serrels**

WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "*Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction* draws players into a vast, new galaxy more vibrant, diverse and interactive than ever before."

WHAT WE SAY:

■ *Ratchet* pushed to 11 – in every department possible.

■ This city makes New York look like 'Poo York' (worst caption ever...)



INFO BYTE

Unlike some previous games in the series, *Ratchet's* perennial sidekick Clank will actually be playable in *Tools of Destruction*.

AXIS OF AWESOME

Well, *Ratchet* wouldn't be *Ratchet* without an insane arsenal of weapons to help dispatch of the bad guys. *Tools of Destruction* certainly doesn't disappoint in this department, sporting a range of WMD's so extensive that good ol' George W himself might be forced to add this game to his 'axis of evil' and invade. The Groovitron, for example, is a weapon so downright funky that it causes your enemies to spontaneously 'boogie'. Yep, it forces the bad guys to dance – they have no choice. The Transmorpher on the other hand turns everyone in range into penguins. We'd like to see the US army compete with that.



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PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ACTION
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-32
■ **RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2007
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY
■ **DEVELOPER:** INCOGNITO
■ **WEB:** www.xmission.com/~ncognito

WARHAWK

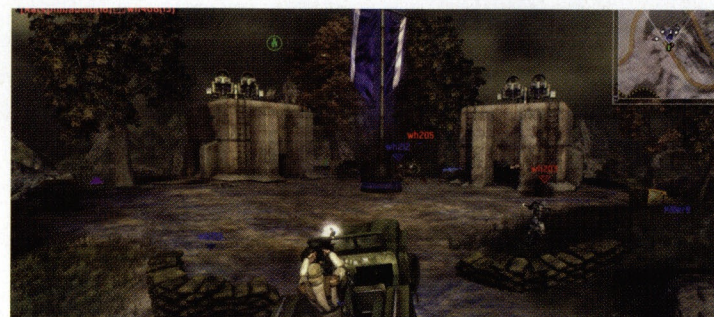
Dogfights aplenty, tanks galore, and on-foot bullet chuckin' all in one!

You're about to get a new bunch of friends. They won't ask to borrow money, try to pash your girlfriend behind your back, or require early bird lifts to the airport. Nope, these folk will be online buddies only, comrades and opposition in Sony's upcoming harbinger of fun and chaos, *Warhawk*. A game you will, in all likelihood, buy.

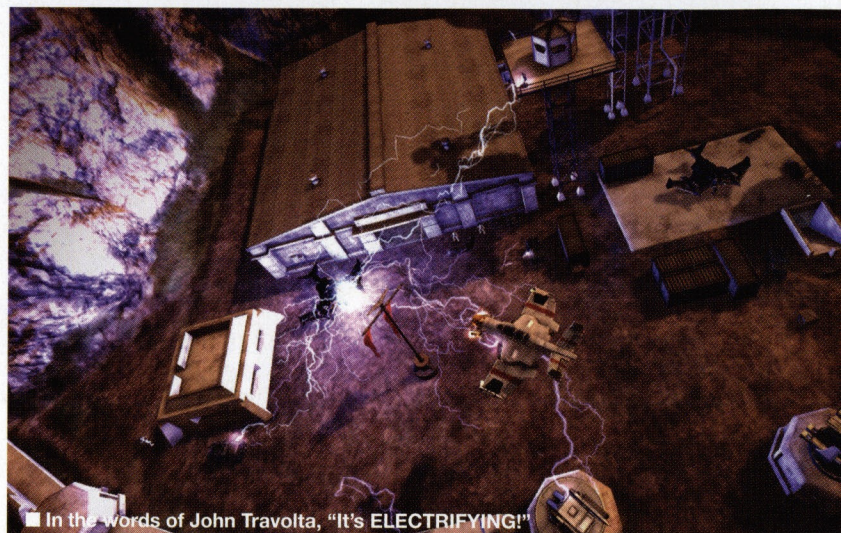
We managed to snag a preview copy of *Warhawk* a few days ago – and then saw office productivity slump lower than Nicole Richie's pants during a narcotics pat down. This is a genuine time gremlin, and when you consider that all the matches we've played have only been with a handful of office friendlies in split-screen, the idea of full-blown 32-player online combat should make you feel mushy and warm on the inside. (To give you an indication of the office buzz surrounding this, Phil was so eager to have a game the other day, he hugged this writer when he arrived to take this game through its paces. The only other sign of affection we've seen from him was when he hugged himself once at lunch because he'd forgotten his jumper.)

Suddenly, the question rings out – what's so good about this game anyway? In short, it's different and it's fun. *Warhawk* is buddy-killing-buddy tomfoolery buttered together with a thousand prodding Midas fingers, a slick little number that offers a big payoff while standing tall in a forest of doppelgangers. *Unreal Tournament III*, *Enemy Territory: Quake Wars* – those games will surely be great in their own way, but you know what you're getting. *Warhawk*, on the other hand, cuts through with watery freshness.

Just imagine the following: you slide around to a mate's pad where he and another buddy are blasting away on a single TV playing *Warhawk*. It's split screen, sure, but when viewing the chaos you spot hives of activity between countless opposition. In one half of the screen Buddy A is playing gunner in a rollicking jeep, cutting down swathes of



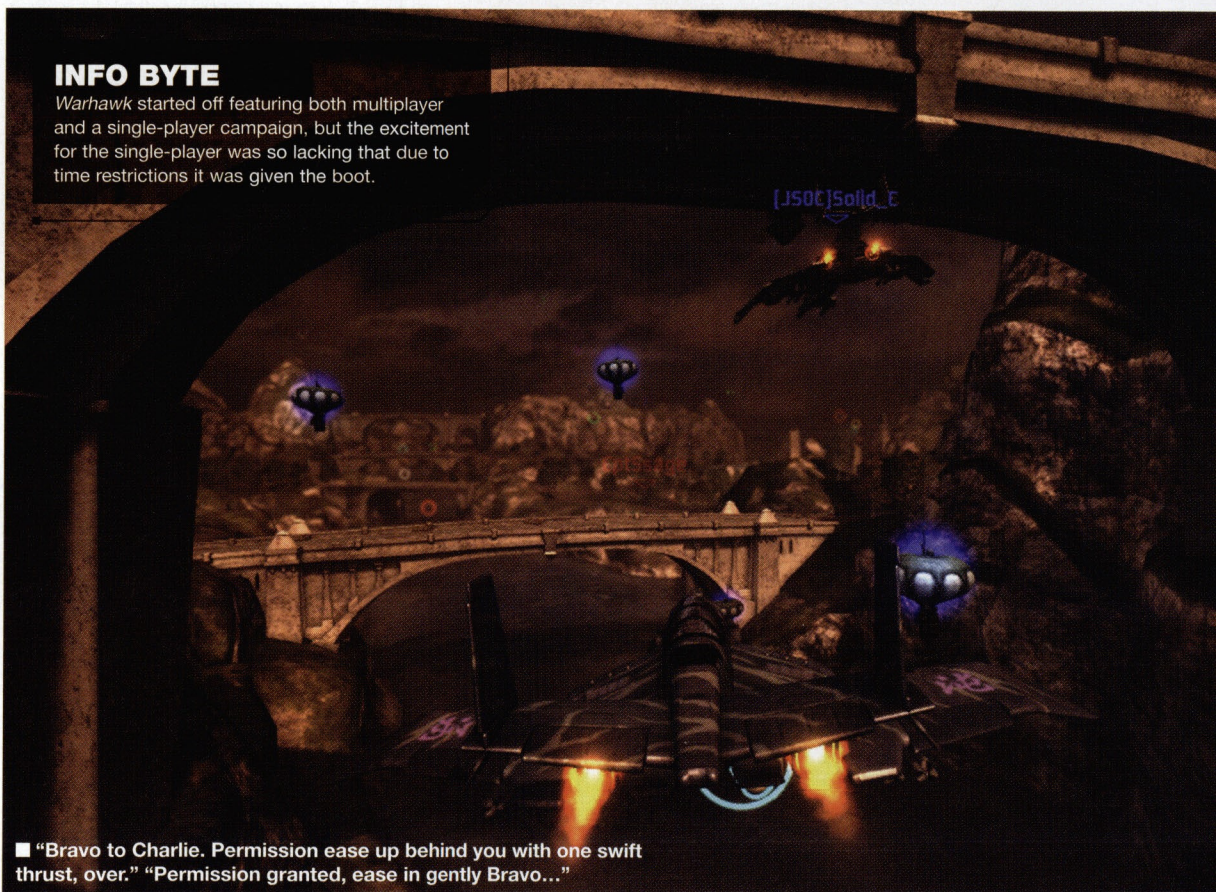
foot soldiers while dodging RPGs, while the other half sees Buddy B flying insane loop the loops while pumping out swarms of seeking missiles high above the game world in an eight-craft dogfight. Before you can take it all in, one of your buddies hands you a spare controller and hits the start button. And just like that you're in! The screen slides effortlessly into quarters without so much of a glitch and you're suddenly equipped with a mere pistol, but surrounded by a playground of endless



■ In the words of John Travolta, "It's ELECTRIFYING!"

INFO BYTE

Warhawk started off featuring both multiplayer and a single-player campaign, but the excitement for the single-player was so lacking that due to time restrictions it was given the boot.

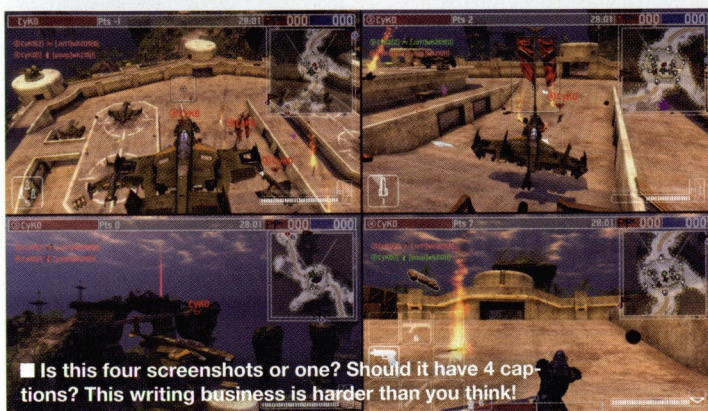


■ "Bravo to Charlie. Permission ease up behind you with one swift thrust, over." "Permission granted, ease in gently Bravo..."





■ “Echo to base, there’s a floating mace in the sky, it seems to be defying gravity. Over.” “Echo, you are in a videogame. Repeat, you are in a videogame. It’s a power-up dipshit. Out”



■ Is this four screenshots or one? Should it have 4 captions? This writing business is harder than you think!



■ Split screen: it’s like an episode of 24, but with less Jack Bauer “DAMMITS!”

“...set to give your online world a C-section and find you more friends than Facebook and MySpace combined.”

possibilities. That’s *Warhawk*.

Obviously the game’s aerial roots come out the strongest, with the mid-air acrobatics of the Warhawks the deepest element of the game’s engine. The third-person ground combat is still good, and features a tonne of weapons ranging from rocket launchers to flamethrowers and the more traditional assault rifles, but the stuff in the air is what brings *Warhawk* together as a package. Featuring Harrier-like vertical take offs, the Warhawks allow you to power up into atmospheric brawls in a blink. From there you can sweep around and collect missile, chaff, and stealth pick ups while avoiding clouds of enemy rockets and machinegun fire, before dishing some back yourself. The Warhawks themselves are decidedly tricky to get the hang off, but that’s only because they’re so manoeuvrable and can pull off a free flowing string of barrel rolls and hard turns. Once you’ve eliminated any immediate threats from your tail then you can go to work taking out ground targets like tanks, jeeps, soldiers and anti-air turrets using your personal WMDs. Raining hell from the air, in other words. Good fun? What the hell

do you think?

So does that mean that you’re stranded, gone, a dead man, if you’re on the ground? As mentioned there’s a bunch of handy pickups about to help level the score. If you’re a particularly cheeky foot soldier there’s nothing to stop you taking shelter in a concrete silo with a rocket launcher and waiting for an unsuspecting bird to fly past so you can blow him out of the sky. There’s a good balance here.

Surprisingly, despite all the perks and techno savvy additions, *Warhawk* isn’t the ugly mug we thought it would be. While it won’t be taking to the catwalk any time soon, there are enough blushing moments to be had when scooting above some of the game’s brilliant oceans and dusk lighting at high speed. On top of that, it’s got a frame-rate reminiscent of Irish Cream rolling down Jessica Alba’s inner thigh. A thought we often entertain.

The only real problem – and it’s a stretch to call it that – is that if you don’t have a broadband connection you’re screwed. There’s no single player mode at all as yet – not even a sort of bot practise mode. On the flip side, however, if you

do have a broadband connection you’ll be thrilled with the amount of options you have. Like *MotorStorm*, anybody with a copy of the game can host a match, and players will also be able to set up a dedicated server for those ultra serious tournaments.

We’re already addicted to *Warhawk*. Considering there’s no one else out there to play against, that’s got to tell you something about the potential fun factor this genre mish mash could provide. Forget *MotorStorm*, forget *Resistance: Fall of Man*, this newborn is set to give your online world a C-section and find you more friends than Facebook and MySpace combined. **James Ellis**

WHAT THEY SAY:

■ “In *Warhawk*, players experience the thrill of white-knuckle aerial combat with swarms of enemy fighters, bone-crunching armored assaults and high-intensity infantry combat...”

WHAT WE SAY:

■ To put it eloquently, gimme gimme gimme gimme gimme gimme...

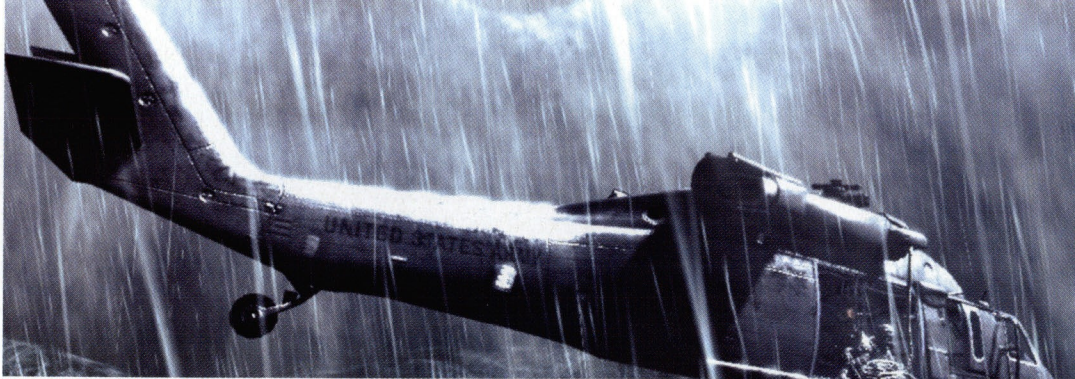
FLY LIKE A TWAT

If you’re keen to part with your dignity while dashing about in *Warhawk*, you can opt to shift control of your jetting death machine to the SIXAXIS’ motion sensitivity rather than the boring old analogue sticks. Of course, evading plumes of heat seeking missiles is hard enough with the trusty sticks, so trying to dodge them while flapping your hands around in the air like a drunken lout practicing his kung fu chicken might not get you far initially. What’s that saying again? Practise makes perfect? Just keep the blinds closed.



PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-16
■ **RELEASE:** NOVEMBER 2007
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ACTIVISION
■ **DEVELOPER:** INFINITY WARD
■ **WEB:** www.callofduty.com



WHAT THEY SAY:

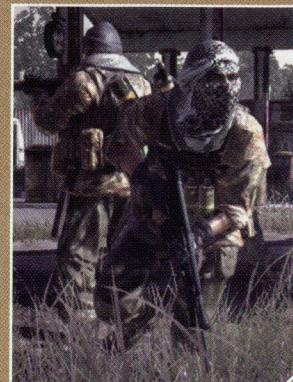
■ "The new action-thriller from the award-winning team at Infinity Ward delivers the most intense and cinematic action experience ever."

WHAT WE SAY:

■ *Heavenly Sword* gives it a tough run in the cinematic stakes but the PS3's big enough for both. A definite game of the year contender here.

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE... EAST

We also scored a brief hands-on with a second *COD4* level set in war-torn Middle East suburbia. We don't have enough room to take you through the whole level but here are the highlights. Night vision goggles, destructible scenery, *Shooter*-style long-distance sniping, devastating tank-busting Javelin missiles, planting explosives on anti-aircraft guns AND laser-painting buildings to be destroyed by missile volleys from Apache gunships. OORAH!



CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

To infinity and beyond...

While Activision's team-player Treyarch cranked out the placeholder sequel *COD3*, the real deal team at Infinity Ward has been hammering away at *COD4* since the moment it finished the critically acclaimed *COD2*. Thanks to its hefty two-year development cycle, and the shift to current day allowing the team to inject in all the exciting ideas it's had over the course of the series that weren't workable within the confines of WWII, *COD4* delivers by far the biggest qualitative leap the series has ever made.

Our recent hands-on involved a mission where a team of elite SAS troops chopper their way to a tanker ship to nab some crucial info. The mission opens with us and our team flying over 50-metre waves, approaching the tanker ship. Sitting opposite us is a grizzled soldier who's face is illuminated faintly by the glow coming from his cigar. Before we've got time to take in the spectacle of the rain-drenched ship, we're fast-

roping down to the deck. While we're just beginning to notice the presence of several armed men inside the nearby command room, our team-mates have already covertly positioned men around the door and are now proceeding to kick it in and lob grenades while others fire through the windows and catch the unsuspecting opposition in the cross-fire. We sheepishly fire a few shots at one of the stragglers but are only too aware of being this team's fifth wheel.

As well as being clever strategists the AI team-mates also moved with uncanny realism. How would we know what's real? Pipe down wise asses. We've watched *truckloads* of war movies and we know what looks real. These blokes flatten themselves against any available cover, peek around corners, cover their team-mates and hustle along with the sort of permanently hunched stride that makes them look seriously lethal.

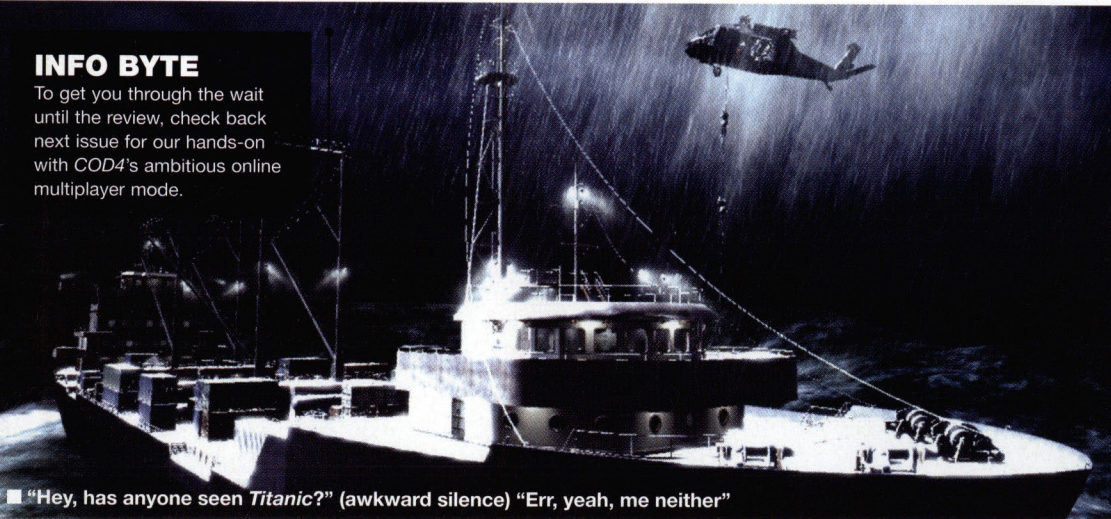
As the team storms through the ship they annihilate opposition with ruthless

efficiency. A drunk guy staggering down the corridor and two more sleeping in their bunks are ready for toe tags in seconds. Outside, amidst the bucketing rain, the opposition digs in and mounts a credible defence using higher ground, but this only leads your team-mates to call for support from the chopper. One sweep of its minigun eliminates the threat by shredding enemies and cover alike.

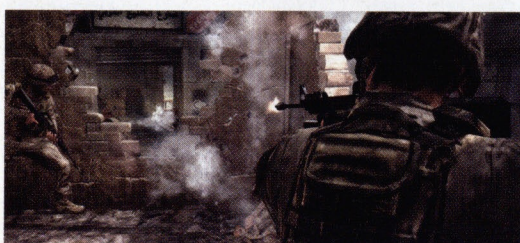
After a brief firefight in the cargo hold your team has collected the intel and is patting itself on the back when a couple of passing MIGs slam missiles into the side of the tanker and all hell breaks loose. The entire ship lurches violently, catwalks collapse, steam pipes explode, debris flies down corridors and water pours in from all angles. What happens next? You'll just have to wait for our upcoming review but trust us when we say that as exciting as this first mission was, it's like dipping your toe in the kiddie pool compared to diving into the rest of the game. **Narayan Pattison**

INFO BYTE

To get you through the wait until the review, check back next issue for our hands-on with *COD4*'s ambitious online multiplayer mode.



■ "Hey, has anyone seen *Titanic*?" (awkward silence) "Err, yeah, me neither"





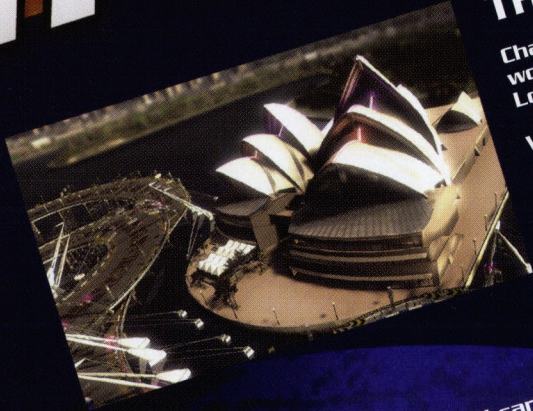
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SECTION

IT'S ALL ABOUT...

THE EVENT

Challenge all takers in adrenaline-fueled drift and race events around the world. Drift around Sydney's Opera House, race through the streets of London and take out the competition in San Francisco, Rome, or Paris.

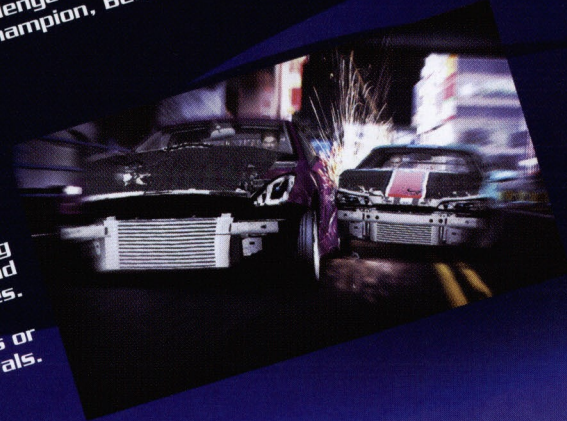
Work your way up to the top through the career mode, create custom races in the Driver DNA lab or challenge some of the best racers in the world, including Australian Drift Champion, Beau Yates.



POWER

Take your pick of 90 fully licensed cars and apply performance enhancing mods to Juice them to the max. Add nitrous, brakes, suspension, tyres and more to turn your cars into the ultimate racing machines.

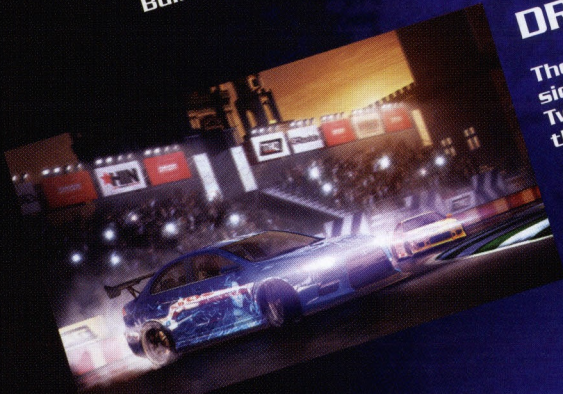
Build and direct an unstoppable racing crew using computer characters or the Driver-DNA profiles of your friends and rivals.



DRIFTING

The hottest thing in motorsport arrives on consoles! Get your car sideways to score big in Juiced 2: HIN's extensive drift modes. Solo Drift, Twin Drift, Drift King and Drift Obliterator will test your driving skills to the limit and bring a whole new racing experience to gaming.

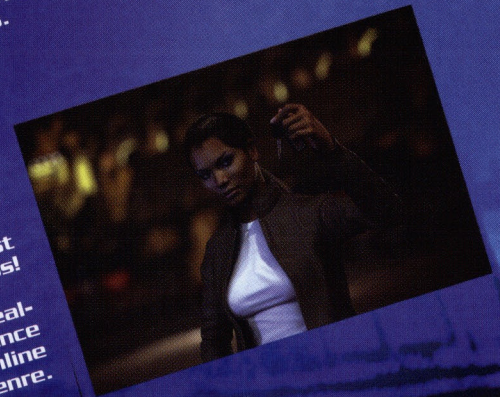
In race mode, execute drifts around corners to charge your nitrous and give you the edge on your competitors.



RISK & REWARD

Compete with anyone in the world through a full Online Career Mode. Bet against your rivals for cash - or put it all on the line and race for Pink Slips!

You can even bet on other races with up to 1,000 other spectators. With real-time odds calculated based on players' Driver-DNA profiles, previous performance and betting levels, Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights brings a whole new online experience to the racing genre.



MODDING

Express yourself using the most powerful modding system ever seen. With 50 layers of decals, hundreds of licensed aftermarket parts and even licensed steering wheels and seats, you can be sure yours will be truly unique.

If you fancy yourself as a modification maestro you can even trade your designs or entire cars online.





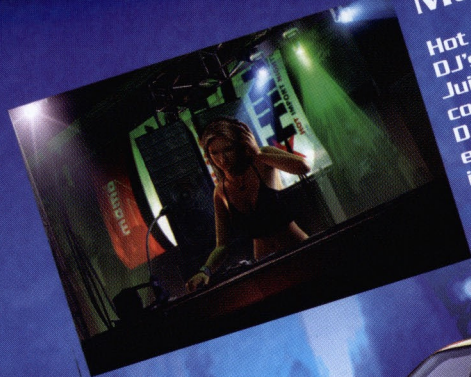
SPEED & CONTROL

Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights blends the precision of a simulation and the accessibility of an arcade racer. You can choose whether to throw your car into corners or take the racing line and find your own style of driving.

Build your Driver-DNA profile with every race. Driver DNA shows a player's style, approach and experience in a wide range of driving attributes. Racing online, you'll automatically download the DNA of your opponents and can then challenge them offline in the DNA lab or recruit them into your crew with the AI driving according to the DNA profile.

MUSIC

Hot Import Nights is known for the hottest DJ's and music acts. The soundtrack for Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights has been compiled by pioneering UK break beat DJ, Adam Freeland. With Freeland's own exclusive tracks and music from artists including Wolfmother, Queens of the Stone Age, The Prodigy, and DJ Rap, this is the soundtrack to the street racing scene.



IT'S ALL ABOUT...





CATCH MY

*It's all about
speed and **control**
for the face of*
Juiced 2:
Hot Import Nights

Ursula Mayes is the record breaking 'Super Street Model' who has graced more covers than any other woman in her field. She handles cases of cash on Deal or No Deal and is the official Hot Import Nights Spokes Model, master of ceremonies for the biggest automotive experience event worldwide.

She's much more than just a pretty face, however. She's a drift driver in her own right and her ride is a hot pink Nissan 240SX. And did we mention she hold records for consecutive wins in her home town arcade on Street Fighter II: Hyper Fight?

Gamers are about to get to know Ursula a whole lot better when Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights is released later this year. Acting as the player's guide to the game, Ursula will show them the ropes and introduce them to all the major players in the Juiced 2 world.

We recently caught up with Ursula at Hot Import Nights: Nightshift in San Diego, California, where she was nice enough to talk games and all things 'Hot Import Nights'.

Would you consider yourself a Gamer?

Definitely. Right now, I'm really into Gears of War, DDA and fun games on my little Nintendo DS when I'm on the plane.

*"I grew up with
4 brothers
and not one of
them could
beat me
when I was
Chun Li"*

DRIFT?

When you play video games, do you let the boys win?

No way! I remember Street Fighter being one of my favorite games when I was little. I grew up with 4 brothers and not one of them could beat me when I was Chun Li. I had all her secret moves down. AA, BB, up, down, up, kick, punch, hahaha...

What's the best part about being involved with HIN?

That's a tough one because there are so many things about HIN that are totally different from one another, yet they all tie in. Well, I definitely love all the die-hard fans out there, all the cool cars (not to mention the crazy drifting and stunt bikes at Nightshift), hot models, musicians I get to meet during interviews and so, so much more. I also like the fact that it's a positive environment for everyone to just chill and have a good time.

What's it like to star in a video game?

It's like starring in a movie, literally. I didn't know there was so much work that goes into creating a video game. Now I have so much more respect for the creators. I've been busy working on quite a few aspects: voice-overs, photo shoots, commercial filming, etc. This is a dream come true. I have the best of both worlds. Rarely are real people used in games and now I'm a character!

How long have you been modeling?

Off and on, since I was in high school. I stopped to practice photography and makeup artistry because I always considered myself (as an artist) to be behind the lens, not in front of it.

Things blew up when I got a spread in Maxim magazine a few years ago.

"There are so many things about HIN that are totally different from one another, yet they all tie in"

What's next for Ursula Mayes?

I just landed my first major cosmetic campaign, which has launched in Korea, Japan and soon the US. I also wrapped filming a feature project in Korea, which is a really big deal over there for actors. I've been asked back for season three of Deal or No Deal, so everyone can catch me on NBC. I'll also be heading to Europe in a couple months.

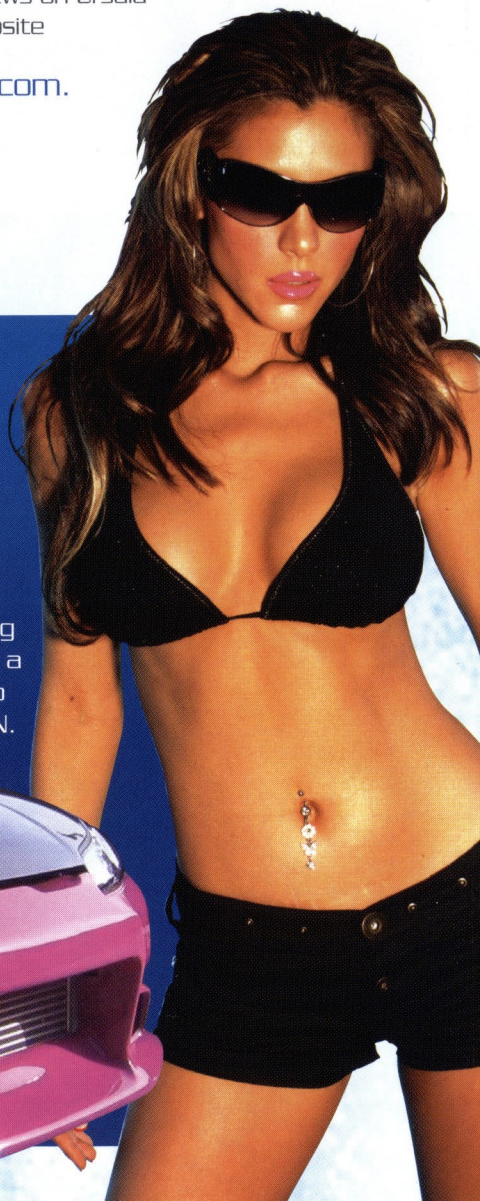
More info and current news on Ursula can be found on her website

www.ursulamayes.com.

DRIVING PASSION

Ursula's started to drift recently and has a hot pink '95 Nissan 240SX, a really popular car within the drifting scene. With a turbo engine, Volk racing wheels and S15 headlights it looks and performs the business and certainly stands out on the track.

When she's not throwing herself sideways around a racetrack, Ursula's other ride is a brand new Lexus LS 460. It's already pimped out with 21-inch wheels, and Ursula's planning some other modifications at a local garage in San Diego she met through HIN.



Juiced 2
HOT IMPORT NIGHTS™

EXCLUSIVE
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Take your gaming to the next level.



The TH-L1 Multimedia Hub for 'Generation Nexters'.

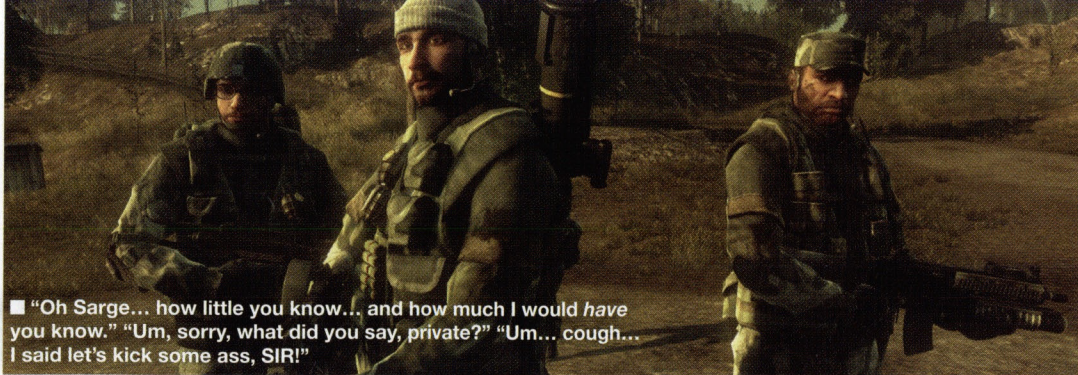
You'll play games like never before! Be blown away with 5.1ch surround speakers, subwoofer and HDMI Inputs (1080p capable) for full high definition display. Direct connection is easy for all your games, DVDs and digital stuff with both iPod and USB terminals on the front. The 'Multimedia Hub' with all you need has arrived. For details contact JVC on 1300 728 225 or visit www.jvc.com.au



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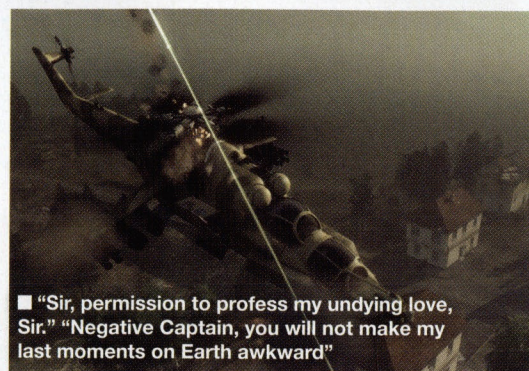
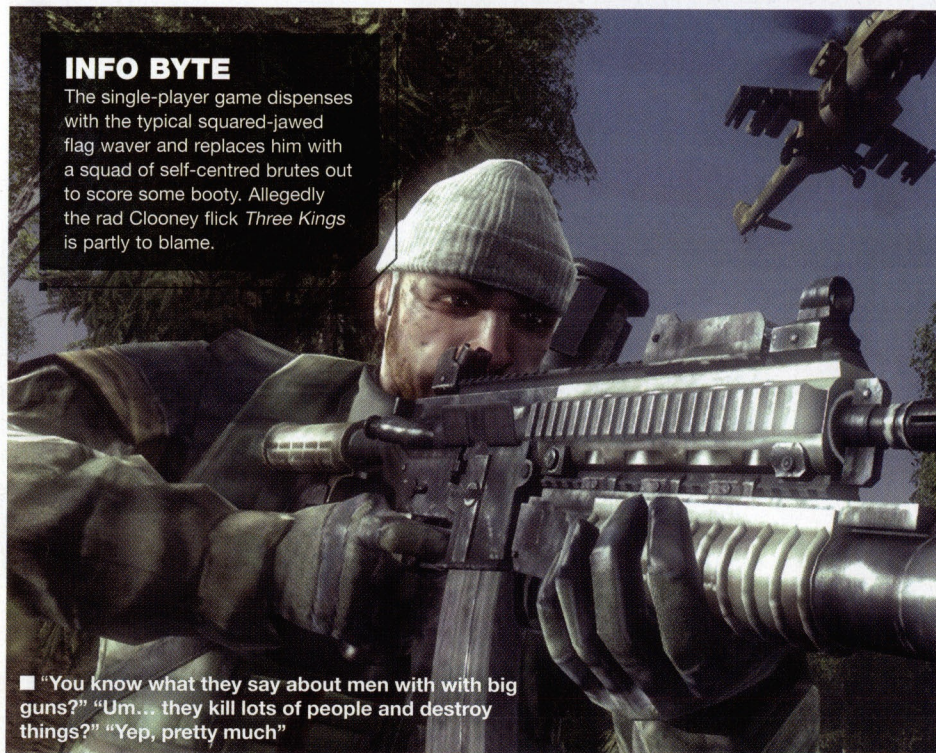
PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-24
■ **RELEASE:** TBA 2008
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA
■ **DEVELOPER:** DICE
■ **WEB:** www.dice.se



INFO BYTE

The single-player game dispenses with the typical squared-jawed flag waver and replaces him with a squad of self-centred brutes out to score some booty. Allegedly the rad Clooney flick *Three Kings* is partly to blame.



BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY

Simply warsome

DICE's new warrior is out to mug your time and money, a straight hold up on a street packed with the ash-curl'd faces of upcoming calls such as *Medal of Honor Airborne*, *Call of Duty 4*, *Frontlines: Fuel of War* and a gazillion others. It's cocky, it's raw, it's *Battlefield* for PlayStation 3 – and don't act like the brand doesn't mean anything to you. Any hardcore gamer is more likely to have its name tattooed on their rear than "mother".

The *Battlefield* series was the only breach in the *Counter-Strike* epidemic that plagued the online world for longer than an entire generation of game consoles. Now it's planning to sink its teeth into a new breed of game player with a spankingly ambitious single-player mode to compliment what will surely be the favoured online multiplayer shooter. And it's all based on one new ace in the hole.

Imagine, you're in the middle of a modern day war zone – something you'd see on CNN. You've got your assault rifle pointed in the direction of certain danger when some delusional upstart

starts running at you firing his paltry dog stopper. You take aim and fire a few shots as he dives behind a rotted timber shack. He's still a liability, and as you like shooting people, you fire a further barrage of 7.62 x 51 mm bullets only for the timber to stop the bullets like Kevin Costner in *The Bodyguard*. You wouldn't be happy would you?

DICE knows this and has worked butt up to create a warzone with completely authentic and destructible environments – both in single and multiplayer modes. Apart from a few exceptions that were necessary to maintain each level's shape, every wall, panel, roof, window – everything can be obliterated like crumbs in the breeze. There's a further point to all this wanton destruction, too.

Apart from making each shootout more realistic – as outlined in the above example – concrete shelters and the like will also become more than just a passing detail on the game map, as players strategise and form plans based on where the best cover is. This has obvious merits for the usual sprawling war

that is multiplayer *Battlefield*, but what about the single-player campaign? Along with standout AI (which we'll believe when we see) the campaign will feature sandbox design at its forefront, with the destructibility of the environments playing a huge role in how players tackle the set objectives at hand.

With a supped-up single-player mode and the usual bevy of online *Battlefield* brilliance set to cause many a red eye amongst gamers, you'd better get some solid exercise in now before you collapse on your couch for an unknown period of time come *Battlefield: Bad Company's* release. **James Ellis**

WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "In a world that's 90 per cent destructible, the gameplay possibilities are infinite"

WHAT WE SAY:

■ Purchasing *Battlefield: Bad Company* will mean purchasing a guaranteed pasty complexion.

JEEPERS

To be honest, the *OPS* jury is still out on the whole "single-player sandbox is fun" thing – particularly after viewing the surely-brilliant *Call of Duty 4* that seems to espouse the sandboxes are only good for kitty litter theory. However, there's one thing that *Battlefield* has that few other titles have come close to offering: an offensive amount of vehicles. Planes, jeeps, artillery guns – you'll be like a spoilt brat in a military compound. Regardless of how the single-player mode turns out (and it may conquer all) there's no denying that multiplayer *Battlefield: Bad Company*, with its newly destructible environments and massive selection of vehicles, is serious about knocking off the other contenders with extreme prejudice.



who needs roads when there's

colin mcrae™

DIRT



Adrenaline

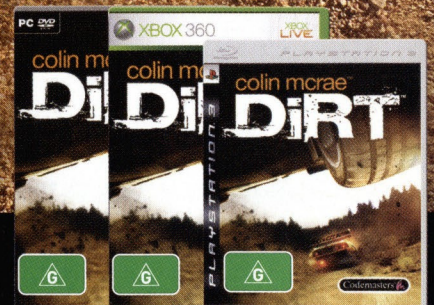


Extreme



Damage

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PLAYSTATION 3



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PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** TACTICAL FPS
■ **PLAYERS:** 1 (TBC)
■ **RELEASE:** NOVEMBER 2007
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT
■ **DEVELOPER:** GEARBOX SOFTWARE
■ **WEB:** www.hellshighwaygame.com

BROTHERS IN ARMS HELL'S HIGHWAY

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers..."

There are two ways to describe *Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway*.

The first, and the most useful, is that it's *Call of Duty* crossed with *Rainbow Six Vegas*. This, no doubt, conjures up a vivid portrait of a game with the unabashed intensity and full-blown blitzkrieg of the *Call of Duty* series with the thoughtfully paced street-smarts of the knees-bent, cover-seeking *Rainbow Six Vegas*. This isn't a half-bad way of looking at it. *Hell's Highway* has acquired many of *Rainbow Six Vegas*' cover mechanics (it even switches to third-person when you're pressed against a surface) and the refined squad controls work in much the same way.

The second way of describing it is that it's quite incredible. An overused superlative attached to many a good-looking game in the past; incredible is a word that nonetheless summarises *Hell's Highway* perfectly.

Put simply, *Hell's Highway* is a WWII game 70 years in the making. Even at this stage, it's clear no Second World War shooter has succeeded in recreating slogging it out in dogged street skirmishes against an equally tenacious foe as well as *Hell's Highway* has. It's brutally authentic and pulls no punches.

More than ever, realism is key. For instance, unlike other shooters, the location of your objective won't be spoon-fed to you – rather you'll need to rely on clues presented to you as you move in the direction of your target. During one mission, squad leader Baker was tasked with finding and destroying two German 88s. He did so by keeping an eye out for the telltale puffs of smoke left behind after firing upon passing planes. When Baker moved closer there was a German stationed on a rooftop acting as a spotter

for the guns, and he was able to follow two other Krauts carrying a wounded comrade back to the 88s. You will learn to recognise hints like these, and set up ambushes accordingly.

The dedication to realism extends far further than removing a few artificial pointers – every part of *Hell's Highway* is designed to make you feel like you're really there. The depth of characters within your squad, the way enemies will displace and retreat if their position becomes untenable, the destructible soft cover, the real-world tactics (fire and manoeuvre) you'll need to rely upon to out-think and out-flank the Nazis, the gratifying rag-doll physics, the gob smacking visuals (individual bullet casings leave behind twirling smoke wisps as they tumble to the ground) – all this and more makes *Hell's Highway* one of the most tantalising first-person shooter propositions this Christmas.

Gearbox and Ubisoft's latest presents something new in a very old theatre of war. It's unlike any WWII FPS that has gone before it – including its own forebears. Deeper, more intuitive and more visceral than ever before, we've little doubt that *Hell's Highway* is set to become the WWII shooter against which all others are measured. **— Luke Reilly**

WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "...brings the critically acclaimed squad-based WWII shooter into the next generation of gaming with amazing graphics and sound, new cutting-edge gameplay features, and a totally redesigned online component."

WHAT WE SAY:

■ Should be the definitive WWII shooter, no question.

■ "Soldier, I need you to guard this bush – if you can't manage that I'll get my own privates to do it, okay? What are you laughing at?"

INFO BYTE

Heavy machine guns can be moved to new positions (by you and the enemy) or fired from the hip (for those who wear their balls on their sleeves).

CHOICE BRO

Operation Market/Garden was a large-scale defeat for the allies. This is interesting because videogames are almost exclusively about the opposite: winning.

We asked Gearbox boss Randy Pitchford what effects an overall defeat has on a videogame.

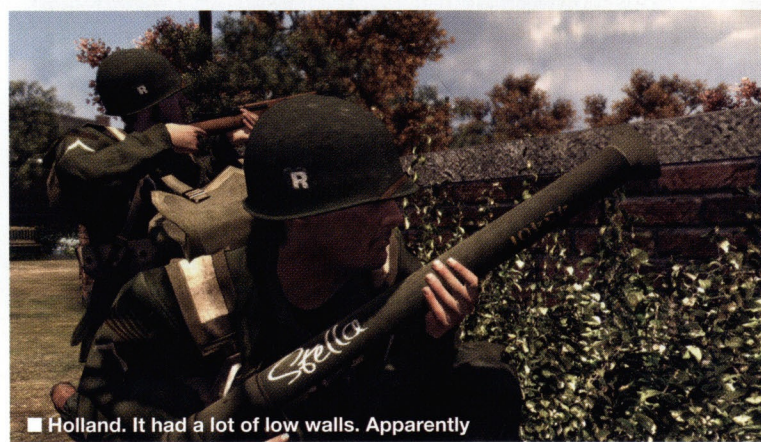
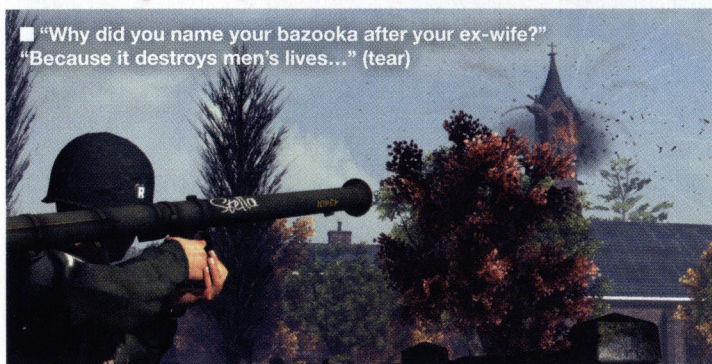
"Market/Garden was a strategic defeat. It's up to the characters in the game to look for a moral victory in the face of that defeat. My favourite *Star Wars* movie is *The Empire Strikes Back* and that doesn't end well for the good guys," says Pitchford.

"I get the 'Wasn't Market/Garden a failure?' question a lot – I think if you understand what makes for a good backdrop and a degree of focus that is required for an intense story than you can rally around this particular moment in history.

After all, Operation Market/Garden was the largest airborne invasion in history. If we wanted to, we could make six games focused entirely on that bit and only cover things that really happened and we could totally blow away the depth and action that you get from contrived games that try to cover everything. I think this industry can use more focus. Think about your favourite war movies and I think you'll understand where we're coming from."

■ "Der Amerikaner hat hundekuchen in seiner linken tasche!" "What?"

■ *Hell's Highway*. Not pictured: AC/DC



O BROTHER, WHERE ART THOU?

OPS shares a foxhole with Gearbox president and CEO, Randy Pitchford



OPS: The mature, intelligent and sophisticated approach is what sets the *BIA* series apart from its peers. Is this a difficult thing to balance and accomplish, and keep accessible?

RP: We believe that war is M rated. We believe that we can present the challenging situations of authentic combat by offering winnable solutions to the player – without frustrating gamers. Our experiences with this have only made us better and better at understanding how

to balance these things. *Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway* represents a culmination of this care and this experience. It's the best game we've ever made.

OPS: *Hell's Highway* seems to share a lot in common with *Rainbow Six Vegas* – a great game in its own right. The particularly effective cover system, for one, seems very similar. Is this coincidence?

RP: It's really funny – we developed the "dig-in" system totally independently of what you see in *Rainbow Six Vegas*. We've always wanted to dig-in to cover. By letting the player press a button to "dig-in" we're putting the power in the player's hands. If you want to lean around corners and if you want to really hug that cover, you can press the dig-in button and do that. If you want to stay entirely first-person the whole time, you can do that too. It's the best of both worlds and will suit whatever play style you have.

OPS: Has there been any things in particular that Gearbox has always wanted to implement into *BIA*, and now the technology is available? The destructible cover looks sweet...

RP: Destructible cover is a big deal. You can see the fidelity there – how every bullet shreds a bit of wood or how

bazooka blasts can displace sand-bags... that kind of thing. It's pretty awesome. There are a lot of inventions in *Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway*. I really like our answers to threat, risk and health. I think we've got a really great answer to this problem in *Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway* with how we represent threat and risk and I think a lot of games are going to steal it from us after they see it.

OPS: Just how advanced is the friendly and enemy AI in *Hell's Highway*?

RP: We've invested a LOT in it. It's become amazingly natural, but super sophisticated over the years. Recently, our lead programmer was interviewed by *Scientific American* magazine because the scientific community has taken an interest in how videogames are starting to shape artificial intelligence invention and design and how *Brothers in Arms* is one of the leading examples of sophisticated Artificial Intelligence in videogames.

OPS: How far has Gearbox gone in *Hell's Highway* to ensure it remains faithful to the ill-fated events of Operation Market/Garden? Are *Band of Brothers* and *A Bridge Too Far* on repeat in the lunchroom?

RP: We really do our homework – I mean,

we really do it. We study the after action reports from the National Archives. We talk to veterans who were there. We have bought aerial recon photos from the British government. We've visited the operational area today and surveyed the battlefields – many times. Colonel John Antal, US Army retired Airborne Ranger, author and historian works in our offices full time. I think you could memorize the areas and details in *Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway* and then go to Holland and get a job as a tour guide. That's not an exaggeration.

OPS: Do you find it odd and/or frustrating that WWII shooters are attracting criticism and cynicism from the press and gamers, for no other reason that they're set in WWII – particularly when few question the validity or the amount of racing games available for instance, and that WWII was the biggest conflict in human history?

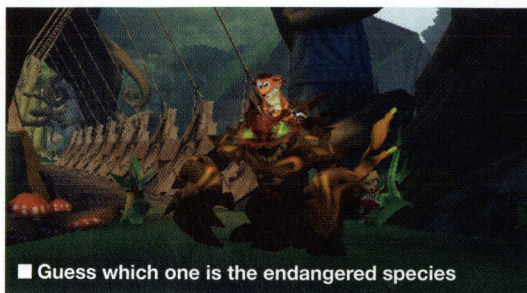
RP: I think there are some core fantasies that most of us are always going to get really excited about. We all know about fantasy and science fiction and war being the really big ones. I don't think it should be surprising that we're going to have amazing videogames that let us fulfill our dreams with respect to these ideas.

PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** ADVENTURE
■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** VIVENDI
■ **DEVELOPER:** RADICAL
■ **WEB:** www.radical.ca



■ **Bandicoots. They're not really orange. And they don't wear pants**



■ **Guess which one is the endangered species**

CRASH OF THE TITANS

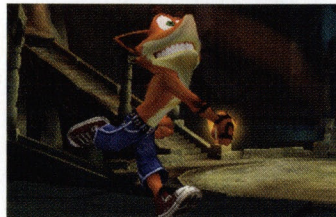
More cash for Crash...

Crash returns (yes, again) to defuse a despicable scheme hatched by his nefarious nemesis Neo Cortex who, being his big headed bastard self, has mutated the local creatures into titanic abominations. To make your task a bit easier you're given the ability to 'jack' your enemies. Before your imagination can head off in a different direction; jacking is a completely wholesome manoeuvre that allows you to take direct control of your enemies and use their special powers to your advantage. Focusing on this core element, the game will have you jacking like there's no tomorrow as you control, play and battle as 15 unique titanic creatures such as Scorporilla, Raticle and Shellephant – you'll never guess which animals they're based off. While in control of a monster in 'jacked' mode,

you can shoot laser beams from your eyes, call down lightning barrages, hurl toxic stink bombs or even impale those pesky enemies with a massive scorpion tail. Nasty.

Another attractive new feature is Crash being able to dish out a bit of the old ultra-violence, with the new-fangled "Hyper-Dynamic Combat" system. This basically means that Crash can now throw punches and flying kicks, and link them into multiple attack combos, and you'll be given the ability to power-up these skills and unlock new moves and blistering combos.

So for those of you frustrated fans who have been patiently biding your time for a chance to smack that crap stirring Cortex in the chops; you may soon get your wish. **— Adam Mathew**

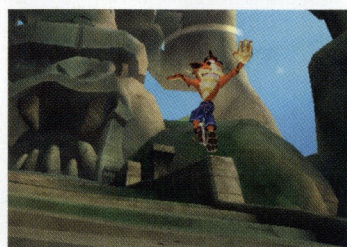


WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "Don't beat 'em, Jack 'em! Control, play and battle as 15 different outrageous and totally unique enemies."

WHAT WE SAY:

■ While we are questioning the differences of beating and jacking, we are nonetheless intrigued...

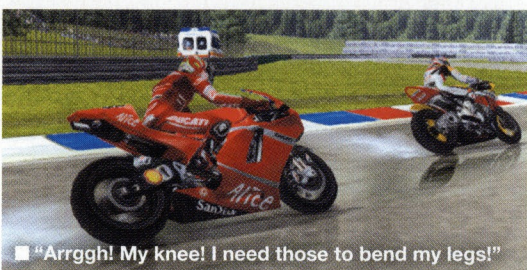


PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

■ **GENRE:** RACING
■ **PLAYERS:** 1
■ **RELEASE:** OCTOBER 2007
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ACTIVISION
■ **DEVELOPER:** MILESTONE
■ **WEB:** www.milestone.it



■ **Bikers. They get away with wearing leather pants**



■ **"Arrggh! My knee! I need those to bend my legs!"**

MOTOGP 07

Got a big trunk? Capcom's putting its bike in it

To avoid the inevitable confusion; this game isn't the sequel to *MotoGP 4*, that particular series was done by Namco. *MotoGP 07* on the other hand is Capcom's very first attempt at the breakneck sport of two wheels, tight cornering and parenthood jeopardising leather.

Featuring the riders, bikes, teams and all 18 tracks from the 2007 season, *MotoGP 07* is definitely taking full advantage of the official license. Interestingly, the game is being developed by Milestone, the creator of the surprisingly good *SBK 07*. As in *SBK 07*, *MotoGP 07* offers a control scheme for the hardcore enthusiasts (those gamers that are crossbred with an octopus and can control rider weight, steering, gears and two independent brakes at 300km/h),

but also caters for the casual racers with a simplified set of riding aids that can be disengaged as your skills improve. The result is a game that will tailor to both arcade tastes and simulator sensibilities.

Visually, *MotoGP 07* is looking relatively tasty with diverse weather conditions, reflective puddles of water and smooth motion-captured animations. Similarly Milestone has gone to a great deal of effort in the sound department by individual sampling each superbike for absolute aural authenticity. *MotoGP 07* is definitely shaping up well, but it's a tricky road ahead for Milestone. Not only does *MotoGP 07* have to beat expectations set by the successful Namco series, it'll also need to offer up some fresh improvements to separate it from the pack. **— Adam Mathew**

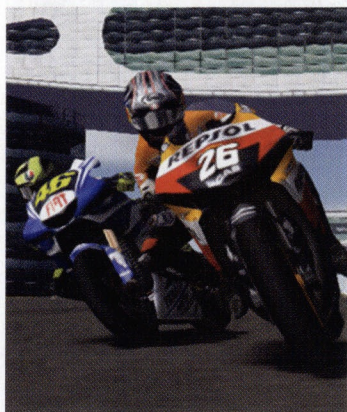


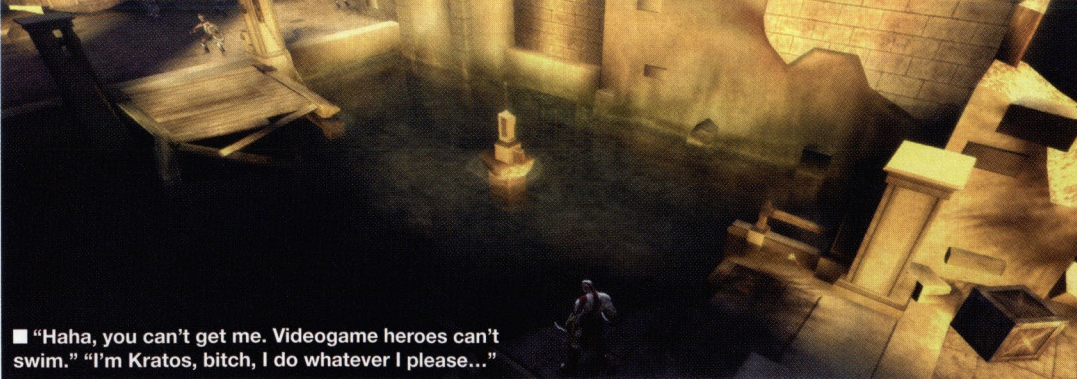
WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "Race in the official, fastest, most thrilling, "balls on the road", sports event in the world."

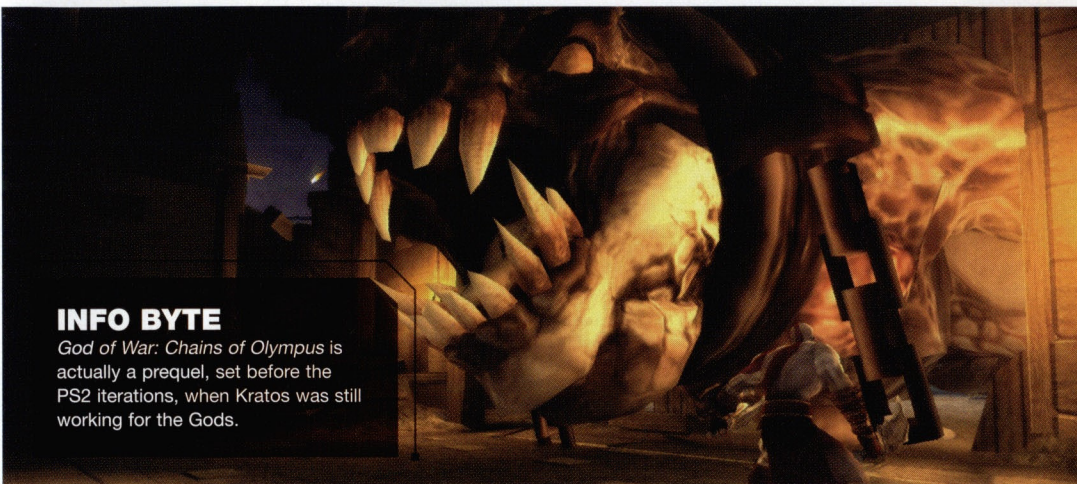
WHAT WE SAY:

■ Uh... our balls are gonna be on the what now?



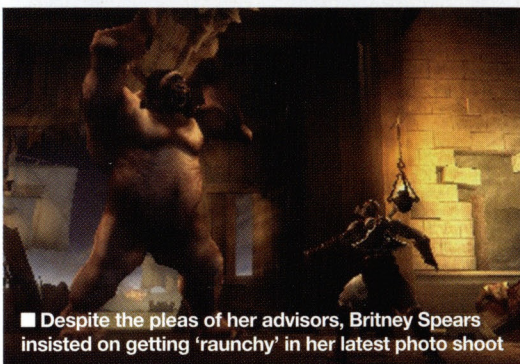


■ "Haha, you can't get me. Videogame heroes can't swim." "I'm Kratos, bitch, I do whatever I please..."



INFO BYTE

God of War: Chains of Olympus is actually a prequel, set before the PS2 iterations, when Kratos was still working for the Gods.



■ Despite the pleas of her advisors, Britney Spears insisted on getting 'raunchy' in her latest photo shoot



■ (Insert one-eyed monster joke here)

GOD OF WAR: CHAINS OF OLYMPUS

Godly...

Of the time we spent playing *God of War: Chains of Olympus* one moment remains burned onto our frazzled memory. After picking up the PSP and adjusting ourselves to the controls, it was a case of so far so good; we'd taken out the trash, disposed of some grunts here and there with ease, and in general we liked what we saw: GoW transported faithfully to the PSP.

Then it happened.

Walking cautiously, in a dungeon-esque environment, we pretty much made a mess of our (not so) fresh underwear when an enormous, club wielding ogre (not unlike El Gigante from *Resident Evil 4*) emerged, bursting uninvited through the concrete to pound our protagonist into the ground. Damn, we thought – time to get our fight on!

A couple of hacks and slashes later we were giving as good as we got, when all of a sudden another hideous beast, roughly four times the size of the ogre,

slammed its way through the gap in the wall, chewing up the aforementioned ogre like a fat kid eating a smartie, before turning to give us a look like 'what now bitch?'. Our pants, which were already soiled from our previous encounter, had just become a whole lot messier.

After a quick visit to the toilet to clean ourselves up, our faces broke into an immediate grin. It was then we realised that *God of War: Chains of Olympus* was not going to be a lame, sub-standard port the likes of which the PSP has often had to endure in the past. *Chains of Olympus* was going to be the epic, stand alone game the PSP deserved, a fully fledged member of the *God of War* gang, one that could stand next to the originals with pride and honour.

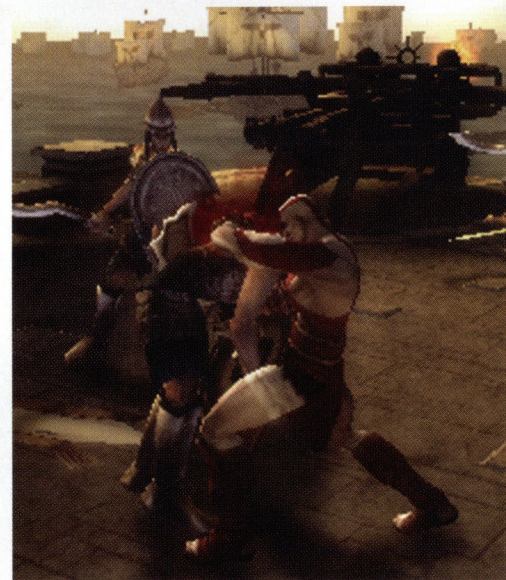
Unlike many franchises making the jump from console to handheld, *Chains of Olympus* has absolutely no control issues whatsoever. Thanks, in part, to *God of War*'s traditionally fixed camera view, the

game never really suffers from the lack of a second analogue stick. The evasion moves are easily enabled by hitting both shoulder buttons (similar to *Ninja Gaiden Sigma*) and moving in the direction desired. This method was so fluid and accessible that after one or two minutes we forgot that *God of War* ever used a second analogue stick.

And miraculously, the epic scope we have become used to in the series has not been scaled down in the slightest. Everything you could possibly expect from a PS2 *God of War* game has, from what we've experienced, managed to translate perfectly onto the PSP. Considering that Ready at Dawn, the studio behind the superlative *Daxter*, is developing the game, it's hard to be surprised. As of writing *Daxter* is arguably the PSP's greatest technical achievement to date. With *Chains of Olympus*, however, the team looks set to redefine this benchmark with ease. **Mark Serrels**

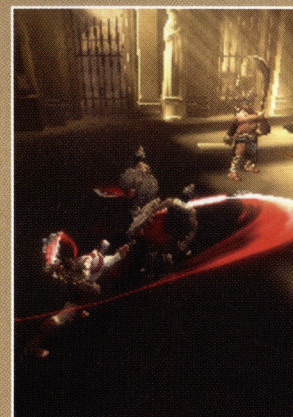
PS3 PS2 PSP PREVIEW

- GENRE: ACTION
- PLAYERS: 1
- RELEASE: DECEMBER 2007
- DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
- DEVELOPER: READY AT DAWN
- WEB: www.readyatdawn.com



KNOCK KNOCK...

Of course, as you'd expect, the button pressing shenanigans that the *God of War* series has become famous for have returned in *Chains of Olympus*. Looking just as jaw dropping in shrink-wrap form, one scene had us commandeering an enormous battering ram and obliterating a huge door single-handedly before tearing through the pathetic minions on the other side. Yep, Kratos has still got it. Surprise bitches! Daddy's home...



WHAT THEY SAY:

■ "Keeping true to the *God of War* franchise, experience dramatic camera angles and epic set pieces, offering a never before seen experience on the PSP system."

WHAT WE SAY:

■ Could be the best PSP game ever. It looks that good.



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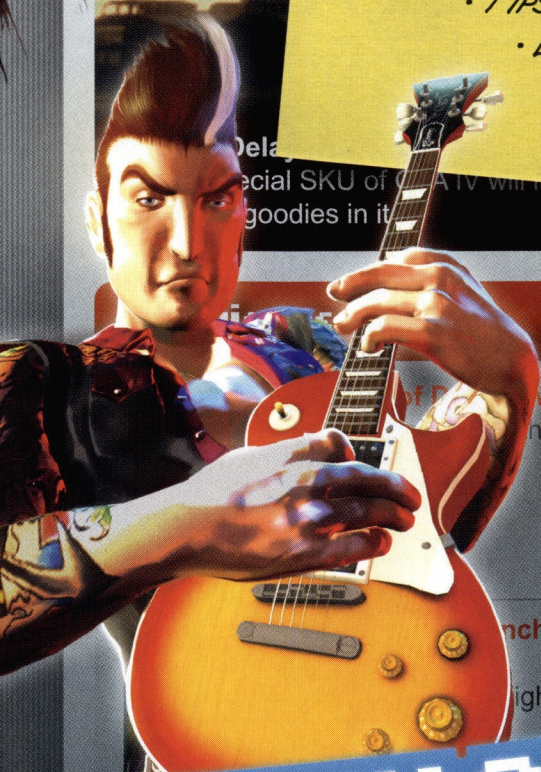
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- ▶ Announced: BioSho



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Words by: Mark Serres

BRINGING IT ALL BACK

Home

The first-person shooter is in the midst of a plague; a plague that has the terrifying potential to drain every last ounce of zest from a genre that originally defined the term. The energy, the cerebral thrill we typically feel when blasting the holy hell out of all manner of ungodly creatures has seemed to evaporate as we now spend most of our time clumsily organising troops, taking cover, struggling in vain with useless gadgets and generally being really, *really* confused. Epic producer, Jeff Morris, probably understands this fact more than any game developer on earth. Leaning back into his chair, he breaks into a smile.

"We are suffering, right now, from

what I like to call TSF... Tactical Shooter Fatigue," he says.

In short the FPS is no longer fun. Boggled down in logistics and slow paced realism, the genre has lost its capacity to be the 'pick up and blast' experience that we all know and love. But before we drown in our own despair and get into full elegy mode, we ask you to halt your hyperventilation and take a deep breath; there is light at the end of the tunnel... in the form of Epic's latest masterpiece: *Unreal Tournament 3*.

If Tom Clancy and his incessant Ubisoft drudgery is the cancer, then the upcoming *Unreal Tournament 3* is the cure; here is a game that intends to blast boredom well and truly out of the first-person shooter. Gone are the team commands, the slow paced gun-play,

the one hit kill frustrations. In: the fast paced, skill-based, frantic gunfire that has defined the FPS since its inception. With *Unreal Tournament 3*, Epic is bringing it all back home.

IF LOOKS COULD KILL

Even if you've never heard of the *Unreal* franchise, it's quite possible that the phrase 'Unreal 3' is a familiar one, hovering somewhere deep in your sub-conscious. Let us do you a favour and remind you: the tools that were designed from the ground up for *Unreal Tournament 3* have become the engine for many of your favourite games, including the Xbox 360's much-touted *Gears of War*. Considering that Epic has had more time to refine the visuals and is utilising superior technology with



the PS3, we are willing to take a deep breath and make this earth shattering statement: yes, *Unreal Tournament 3* is a better looking game than *Gears of War*. There, we said it.

We'll explain. Despite the lack of fancy camera gimmicks, from a texture standpoint, the maps, backgrounds, and character models in *UT3* are markedly improved from any game released using the engine thus far – meaning that as of this moment there is probably no game in existence with the graphical flair that *UT3* exudes. That's right folks – it's a bit of a looker.

But this kind of polygonal pornography does have a point. In addition to giving us a weirdly uncomfortable boner, *UT3*'s graphical prowess is intended to contribute to

the *Unreal* experience. The guns, for example, look awesome – each and every one of them – but for the team the most important aspect of weaponry was, first and foremost, balance. The second? That they looked, and felt, fun to shoot.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

It seems that the trend these days is to make guns look infinitely cool when reloading, with tightly animated sequences and sound effects, but when it comes to firing the bloody things all we get is a crappy bit of fire, some smoke if we're lucky, and a damp squib of a sound effect. Thankfully, this is not the case with *UT3*.

The rocket launcher is a perfect

case in point. A staple throughout the entire *Unreal* franchise, Epic has really gone to town in the third iteration. While the primary function of the weapon, as you'd expect, is shooting really big rockets up the rectum of your foes, a secondary function allows you to charge up to three rockets in the chamber before unleashing all hell on your hapless opponents.

Just the idea of this is cool enough, but beware – watching this function in motion may actually make a genuine mess of your pants. The way the enormous chamber swings round, complete with awesome 'clunking' machinery sounds, really adds to the experience, giving the weapon a weight and realism we rarely expect from this type of game. Rocket launchers in first-

person shooters are hardly a new invention, but taking the time to make it fun to simply reload and fire takes the weapon beyond the standard.

This commitment extends itself to all the weapons in *UT3*'s arsenal. The Bio Rifle fires out what can only be described as a healthy portion of deadly green 'splooge', melting enemies mercilessly on impact. According to Jeff Morris, "The effect guys really went to town [with the Bio Rifle]". We can say, from experience, that he isn't wrong. The uses for the Bio Rifle are endless and completely malleable. The green splooge is explosive, so we found ourselves leaving our enemies a trail of death to follow before unloading lead hell as they approached. Firing at the 'splooge' caused it to explode, killing the enemy instantly, as an irritatingly smug smile began to form across our satisfied mugs.

The undoubted piece de resistance however, came in the form of the 'Redeemer'. Basically a handheld nuclear weapon, the Redeemer's power is ridiculously overwhelming and destructive – it must be seen to be believed. Firing off a round completely changes the landscape


of the game, almost as if the entire map has erupted in chaos. The sound is deafening and an enormous wind careers though the area, creating a completely convincing impression of a nuclear blast.

But for all the awesome weapons, surprisingly Epic is actually committed to making less of them. One producer claimed that many ideas for new weapons were ultimately consolidated as secondary functions in other weapons. It's all part of an attempt to create the best balance possible, hence making *UT3*'s multiplayer experience rewarding and worth returning to for years to come. Epic seems adamant that every weapon in the game had its place in the hierarchy; that no weapon was overpowered or useless. It's clear that, in this game, balance and fun is the clear priority.

VEHICULAR HOMICIDE

The *Unreal* series has always been famous for its furious gunplay, and instantaneous action without delay, but with *UT3* Epic has really cranked it up a notch. Whereas multiplayer games like *Battlefield 2* often require players to make marathon-esque jaunts to simply make it back into the thick

of things post spawn, *Unreal* has nothing of the sort. Despite the fact that many of the maps feature huge, sprawling environments, you will rarely find yourself more than a single minute from the nearest firefight.

The major reason for this is surprising, yet inspirational: hoverboards. Yep, you read correctly, *hoverboards*. We've been hankering for one of these bad boys since *Back to the Future II* hit cinemas and, we're glad to say, with *Unreal Tournament 3* we've finally got our wish. Whilst on foot, all it takes is a quick press of  and you'll immediately find yourself hurtling across the map at full tilt towards your enemies, the flag, or whatever target the gametype dictates. Control of the hoverboard can be managed via SIXAXIS motion-sensing, but the option to go with the more traditional analogue stick control also exists.

This hoverboard, which is available at all times, is only the tip of the iceberg. Vehicle based combat has always been a popular aspect of FPS multiplayer, and this is a feature of the genre that Epic has attempted to push to the forefront with *UT3*. There are almost too many vehicles to mention, so we'll give you a quick rundown of the few

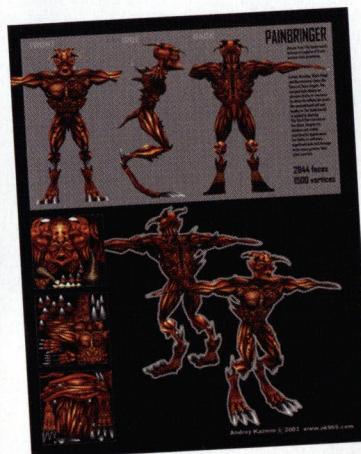
"Basically a handheld nuclear weapon, the Redeemer's power is ridiculously overwhelming and destructive – it must be seen to be believed."

■ "Gee, Robocop... you been working out recently?"



THE MODFATHER

Unreal Tournament 3 is set to be the first console game to support user mods, meaning that maps created by fans via the PC can be downloaded and played on the PlayStation Network. There is talk of Epic and Sony combining to create a top ten maps downloadable feature on the PlayStation Store, a move that would undoubtedly extend the replay value of *UT3* exponentially. The mod feature is apparently instantly accessible with infinite possibilities, according to one of the producers, "It's only a matter of time before we see a player wearing a sombrero". Um, yeah, great... a sombrero... now if someone could just make a naked Scarlett Johansson and Jessica Alba 'making out' mod, then we might be onto something. Yep, we're weird like that.

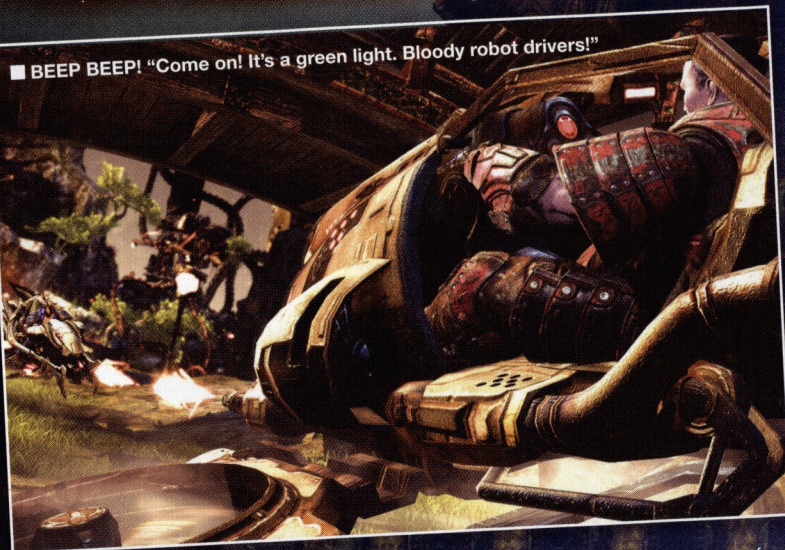


■ "Purple Rain, Purple Rain..."

■ "If you squeeze too hard you'll get piles... just letting you know..."



■ BEEP BEEP! "Come on! It's a green light. Bloody robot drivers!"



that caught our eye specifically.

The vehicles in *UT3* are divided into two specific groups: the Axon and the Necris vehicles. While the Axon range is made up of your FPS standards (buggies, Jeeps, tanks, etc) the Necris group is full to the brim with innovative new vehicles that really strive to redefine the nature of vehicular combat in shooters.

We spent most of our time in the beyond awesome 'Dark Walker'. The best way we can describe this monstrosity is by referring you to the recent remake of *War of the Worlds*. Remember those enormous spidery things that managed to make Tom Cruise look even smaller than he already is? Those alien instruments of death that had Dakota Fanning whining even more than usual? Well, imagine being at the helm of one of these towering purveyors of destruction, reigning laser death on all who cross you – that is the magic of the Dark Walker.

The Dark Walker, in many ways, completely rewrites the vehicle handbook. While most vehicles tend to struggle over steep terrain, this bad boy utilises its spindly limbs to navigate and conquer most surfaces in a realistic manner. And contrary to standard vehicle design the Dark Walker can actually crouch – to help aiming and crush those sneaky players who think they can sneak between your legs. Its primary weapon is a twin laser beam that kills instantly; the secondary weapon is a piercing 'scream' that knocks players off their feet, making them easy targets ripe for the picking.

OH... WE ALMOST FORGOT...

While *UT3*'s multiplayer is undeniably the major focus and the main reason for purchasing the game, it would be unfair to gloss over Epic's genuine attempt at creating a substantial single-player mode. As opposed to creating a linear experience where players mow through multitudes of brainless goons, *UT3*'s single player is based around a set of missions that play very similarly to an objective gametype in multiplayer.

And the AI has been adjusted perfectly to suit this gaming experience. While most CPU opponents are programmed to robotically aim perfectly and miss a certain percentage of the time, *UT3*'s AI actually behaves like a human player. If you strafe, the AI will attempt to track you, and realistically miss some shots in the process. This move rewards players who

play smart, similar to the experience of playing with human opponents.

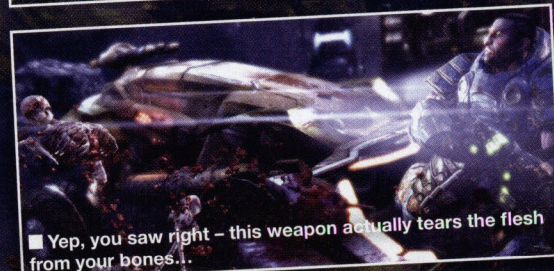
In addition, the missions themselves reflect this type of innovation – abandoning the usual level structure for something that resembles RTS progression. Confused? Yeah, we were too – but we'll at least make an attempt to explain how it works.

The level structure of *UT3* takes the shape of a mission tree. You can choose different missions throughout the game and the outcome and the objective of that mission will shape how you play the remainder of the game. As a result of this, players must make strategic decisions: choosing the correct missions and planning how the outcome will affect the landscape of your ultimate objective. It's an interesting diversion and one that adds depth to single player without deviating too much from the *Unreal* experience.

And that intense experience, in the midst of Tactical Shooter Fatigue, is unique to *Unreal Tournament 3*; an experience that makes for a refreshing, yet familiar change of pace. By making *UT3* a fast and furious, action-based shooter, Epic is bringing the genre back to its roots. This is a game that eliminates the dull, exterminates the boredom and squashes the turgid realism of next gen shooters thus far. This game will never bog you down with irrelevant choices, and useless gadgetry, instead *UT3* throws you headfirst into a shooter focused on accessible speed and fun. This, combined with the most advanced graphics on any console, renders *Unreal Tournament 3* one of the most exciting games on the FPS landscape, and considering how crowded the genre is at the moment, this is a real achievement. ■

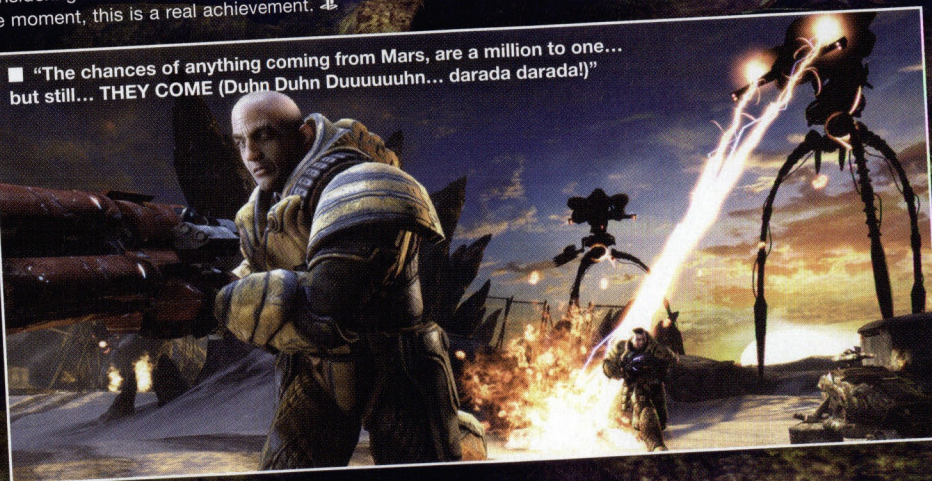
SPIDERMINES, SPIDERMINES...

...do whatever Spidermines do... which, in the case of *Unreal Tournament 3* is cause an insane amount of destruction while looking really really cool. Spidermines are part of the 'deployable' section of *Unreal*'s weaponry, a section that looks set to play a huge part in *UT3*'s gameplay. Carryable by hand, or via special purpose vehicles, the deployables have numerous different effects within the gaming environment. The Spidermine traps in particular can be planted anywhere on the game map; when enemies approach those creepy little insect-weapons scurry from their lair, chasing your foe before exploding upon impact.



■ Yep, you saw right – this weapon actually tears the flesh from your bones...

■ "The chances of anything coming from Mars, are a million to one... but still... THEY COME (Duhn Duhn Duuuuuuhn... darada darada!)"





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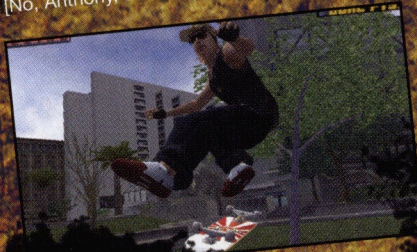


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TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

Not the right Fett

It's a tad lame compared to the previous entry but if you spend \$9000 in the skate shop you can play as Jango Fett. Not Boba, mind you – Jango. The "choice, bro" version of the bounty hunter. You can't see it, but everyone in the office is giving George Lucas the finger [No, Anthony, that's just you. Again – Ed].



GUITAR HERO

"Man, this crowd is dead"

Change the crowd member's heads to either monkey faces or skulls. We're fond of both monkeys and skulls here at OPS and couldn't decide which to pick. So here they both are. You're welcome. Crowd Cheat 1 – Yellow, Blue, Blue, Orange, Orange, Blue, Yellow. Crowd Cheat 2 – Yellow, Blue, Yellow, Yellow, Blue, Blue, Orange, Orange. Rock on.



DIRTY, DIRTY! HEATERS!

WORDS: ANTHONY O'CONNOR

OPS TAKES A FOND LOOK AT THE CHEAT-HAPPY GAMES OF PAST AND SOME PRESENT – AND ASKS "WHERE HAVE ALL THE COOL CHEATS GONE?"

What happened to crazy old school cheats? Not like "extra ammo" or "flak jacket" but really cool ones like moon physics, slow motion, different character costumes – stuff like that? How come in *Hitman 2: Silent Assassin* you can play all manner of silly buggers but in *Hitman: Blood Money* the cheat field is as bare as the back of 47's barcode-branded bonce?

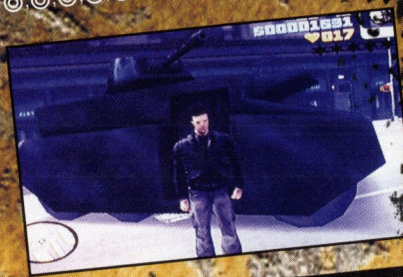
Don't tell him we said that though. We're allergic to being garrotted by fibre wire. True story. Anyway, in the grand tradition of old cranky gamers bitching about how "cool things used to be before you damn kids and your big trousers came along" we're going to have a gander at some of our favourite cheats, in no particular order.

GRAND THEFT AUTO III

Tanks a bunch or bunch of tanks?

As this series got better so did the cheats. The obvious and most talked about cheat in this game was the tank one. Tap in the code and a tank falls from the sky. Hell you can make it rain tanks, then hop in one and blow shit up. There's also a rumour of a public urination cheat. We couldn't get it to work – but if one you champion readers manage it – take a quick snap and we'll send you out a kick arse prize. Anyway, to get the tank tap:

⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ R1, L2, L1, △ ⊙ △



BLOODRAYNE

Hooray for boobies!

Oh Rayne, you really had all the makings of a classic franchise. You were hot, merciless, liked wearing leather and a vampire to boot. Plus you had to feed on your victims to stay alive. Too cool. Unfortunately, due to a rather average sequel and a woeful movie (damn you, Uwe Boll, damn you TO HELL!), we're not likely to see a *BloodRayne 3*. So console yourself by plugging the cheat code JUGGYDANCESQUAD in. You can imagine what happens. Chest puppies go from mild jiggle to full-on inflatable-castle bounciness – matched only, perhaps by Rachel from *Ninja Gaiden Sigma*, and that's saying something.



GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS

"Roads? Where we're going we don't need... roads."

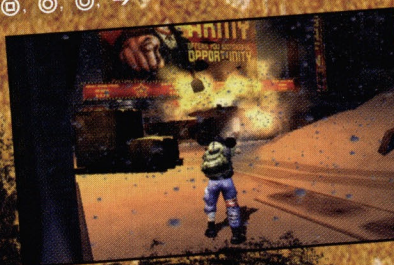
Okay, so *Vice City* gave us flying cars but they flew badly, staying airborne for a limited amount of time and then dropping down again. You never got the soaring sense of freedom that comes with this cheat: **Ⓢ, ↓, L2, ↑, L1, Ⓢ, ↑, Ⓢ, ←**. Wheee!



FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Take it slow, baby

A tragically overlooked classic, this game was full of some really unique and groundbreaking ideas. Plus all the shooting and explosions were cool. So cool, in fact, we chose to use the slow-motion cheat. Watch your carnage unfold at a snail's pace by pressing: **Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, →**.



DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

Mighty brain meats of doom

Cracking little game, developed by Aussie studio Pandemic. The best weapon, other than the disintegrator ray, was using your mind to lift people, trucks, cows and various projectiles, then launching them at... other stuff. Problem was your "mind power" would often run out rather quickly. Whack in **Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, →, Ⓢ, Ⓢ** and your mind power is limitless. Taste Crypto's brainy wrath. HU-MAN scum!



DIE HARD: VENDETTA

"Now you have a little head. HO! HO! HO!"

Not exactly a classic, but timely with *Die Hard* 4.0 opening at time of writing. This is the very thing we were talking about – silly cheats that don't really help you but are cool anyway. EG: Mega heads – **Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ** and for pinheads: **Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ**. Yippee-Ki-Yay M[elon farme]r!



GOD OF WAR II

Something's fishy...

Oh, and here it is. The hidden topless chicks behind one of the curtains on the first level almost got it – but getting the 'Cod of War' suit is surely the coolest pointless cheat. You get it for beating the game on any level, then can restart wearing the fish suit. Kratos playing silly buggers, eh? We wonder what cool extras they'll cook up for the third one on PS3 and the prequel on PSP.



HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

Nailed 'em all...

There are heaps of awesome cheats for *Hitman 2* (check the net, there are dozens) but we had to pick one – and we went with the nail gun cheat. This doesn't actually give you a nail gun, but rather makes your bullets pin your enemies to the walls, ceilings and so forth. Nail it by pressing: **Ⓢ, Ⓢ, ↑, ↓, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ** and you're ready to rock.



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Moony devil chicks get big points

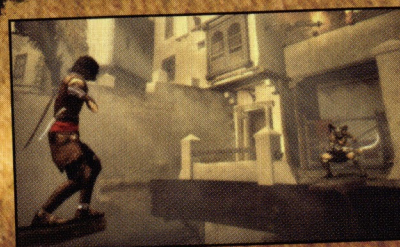
Go to options, cheats and enter YOHOMIES – all the cheats and characters are unlocked. Play as Darth Maul or some hot, naked devil chick. But best of all is the moon physics where you float and combo like a mad beast. A beast we say!



PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES

The multi-weapon bonanza

Feeling like bringing a bit of the present to the past? Pause the game and enter **↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, ←, →, ←, →, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ**. Now you secondary weapon is a chainsaw. You can also get a phone, a swordfish or a rattle. Oh that Prince and his wacky world of weapons, will he ever learn?



DIRTY, DIRTY! HEATERS!

LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE

Lighten up

This is another game you should probably own – good fighting, tight graphics, epic feel. The story is mind-bending, in a good way, although some of the dialogue sounds like the bombastic ranting of a Goth on a red wine and valium bender. This is a very dour and serious game. Why not brighten things up by making it go all cartoony? Pause the game and enter ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, □, □, ○, ○ and enjoy the results.



MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

"Hey, nice hat fella!"

This tidy WWII FPS has a veritable cornucopia of cheats you can enter in the code typewriter under cheats in the options menu. The cool thing is you can then turn them on or off. Want your rifle to blast *Star Trek*-esque torpedoes? Enter TPODOMOHTON – done. But our favourite had to be the "men with hats" cheat: HABRDASHR. On the first level alone we had a machine gun-headed sergeant and many grunts with a bad case of the dreaded boat heads. That is, they had boats on their heads. Big ones. We laughed. A lot.



MERCENARIES

Always going Ford

Harrison Ford fans were well catered for in LucasArts' North Korean blast 'em up. To play as Han Solo simply press ←, ←, →, →, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↑ at the PDA factions screen (alternately you can collect 110 Blueprint bounties). To play as Indiana Jones, collect 20 National Treasure bounties.



THE THING

A flare for the macabre

You may know of *OPS*' love of *The Thing* game. Woefully underappreciated upon its release, much like the John Carpenter movie upon which it was based (continuing the narrative directly afterwards), your flare is often your friend in the dark, sub zero environment of Antarctica. When your torch batteries fail and the darkness creeps in, throwing a few flares around makes things (tee-hee) a little less creepy. However if you want a flare that never ends simply select the flare – don't throw it – highlight another object in your inventory, then go back to the flare. It should last as long as you do.



SPLASHDOWN

"I need air support"

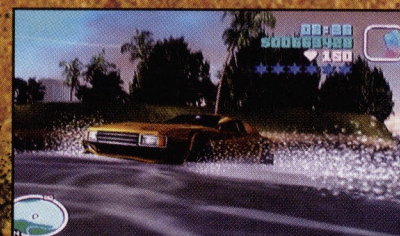
At the main menu, choose Options. At the options menu, hold □ and quickly press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ○, ○, ○, ○. The Cheat Name screen will appear. Enter F18 to unlock a jet that you can do a time trial against. Good luck with that, it was a fiddly, bloody bugger of a cheat.



GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

Is it a car or a boat?

There was a lot of wailing and gnashing of teeth over which one to include here as there are so many great cheats. The flying car is probably the best but they improved that cheat in *San Andreas* big time, therefore we give you... floating cars. They motor along the usually deadly water like boats. Enter ←, □, ○, □, □, ○, □, □. You can also shoot the moon with your sniper rifle and it changes size. Gotta love the little GTA extras, bless Rockstar's little cotton socks.



ICO

That's f&@%#!g teamwork...

This game's a little gem. From the makers of *Shadow of the Colossus* the cheat is hard to get at but it's worth it. SPOILER ALERT: at the end of the game you find yourself walking along a seemingly endless beach until you find Yorda. Cue the real ending. Save and restart. Now a mate can play Yorda using the other controller. How sweet is that?



WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE CHEAT? WRITE IN AND TELL US IN THE USUAL FASHION AND JOIN OUR DEMAND FOR A RETURN TO THE GLORY DAYS OF WACKY CHEATS.



BEYOND REVENGE LIES REDEMPTION

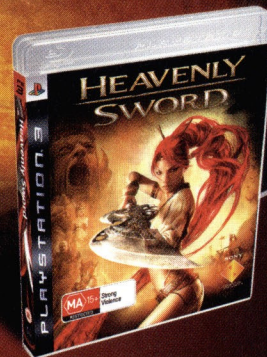
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Your clan persecuted for generations and your father kidnapped.
Your only hope is a terrifying weapon sent from the heavens.
Do you take up its cursed power against the invading king and his army?
Do you take your destiny as the legend foretold and lead your people to salvation?
Or will you let revenge consume you before the heavenly sword does?

Download the demo from PlayStation Network now.
In stores September 2007.

www.heavenlysword.com



This is living

PLAYSTATION 3

ROCK

THE SONGS SO FAR...

GHII

Miss Murder – AFI*
 School's Out – Alice Cooper
 Sabotage – Beastie Boys*
 Paranoid – Black Sabbath
 Cities on Flame with Rock and Roll
 – Blue Öyster Cult
 Through the Fire and Flames
 – DragonForce*
 Slow Ride – Foghat
 Welcome to the Jungle – Guns N' Roses*
 Barracuda – Heart
 The Number of the Beast – Iron Maiden*
 Rock and Roll All Nite – KISS
 Cult of Personality – Living Colour*
 One – Metallica*
 Mississippi Queen – Mountain
 Knights of Cydonia – Muse*
 Even Flow – Pearl Jam*
 Lay Down – Priestess*
 3's and 7's – Queens of the Stone Age*
 Suck My Kiss – Red Hot Chili Peppers*
 Paint It, Black – The Rolling Stones*
 Rock You Like a Hurricane – Scorpions
 Raining Blood – Slayer*
 Cherub Rock – Smashing Pumpkins*
 She Bangs The Drums – The Stone Roses
 Reptilia – The Strokes*
 The Metal – Tenacious D*
 She Builds Quick Machines – Velvet Revolver*
 My Name Is Jonas – Weezer*
 La Grange – ZZ Top

ROCK BAND

Paranoid – Black Sabbath
 (Don't Fear) The Reaper – Blue Öyster Cult
 Wanted Dead or Alive – Bon Jovi*
 Suffragette City – David Bowie*
 Learn To Fly – Foo Fighters*
 Main Offender – The Hives*
 Enter Sandman – Metallica*
 Mississippi Queen – Mountain
 In Bloom – Nirvana*
 Go with the Flow – Queens of the Stone Age*
 Rockaway Beach – The Ramones*
 Tom Sawyer – Rush
 Vasoline – Stone Temple Pilots*
 Reptilia – The Strokes*
 Say It Ain't So – Weezer*
 Won't Get Fooled Again – The Who*
 (*denotes a Master Track)

Rivalries. They're everywhere. The very fabric of mankind is built upon them.

Australia vs. New Zealand. Schwarzenegger vs. Stallone. Ford vs. Holden. *Seat up* vs. *seat down*. It's tribe against tribe, and it appeals to the inner caveman within all of us.

The gaming world has been host to a great many rivalries in its short history. Mario vs. Sonic. *FIFA* vs. *Pro Evo*. Nintendo fanboys vs. rational adults.

Well, prepare to add another to the list. *Guitar Hero* vs. *Rock Band*.

It's master vs. apprentice. One will be unleashing face-melting music and pure rock 'n roll manna in front of a writhing sea of sweaty fans, the other, presumably, doing much the same thing – only to a smaller crowd and somewhat uglier groupies.

But which will be MOST worthy of the two-pronged salute? Which is most likely to have you leaving your job, growing a beard, buying a van and seriously considering having a snake tattooed on part of your *scrotum*? It's time to blow doors down.

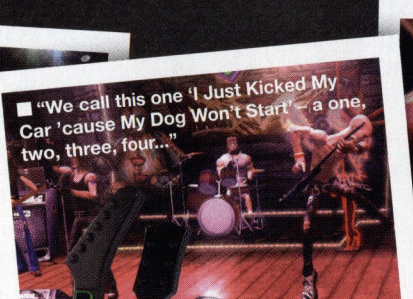
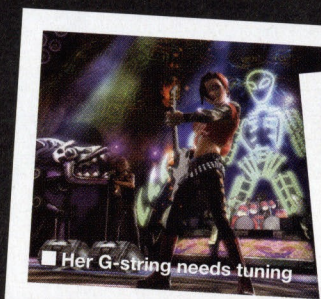
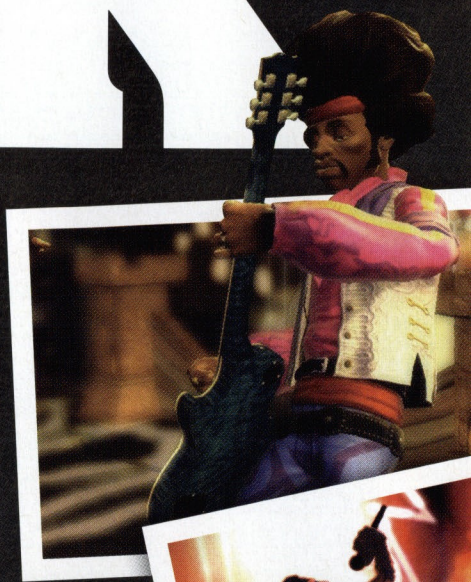
GUITAR HERO III: LEGENDS OF ROCK

■ DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT ■ PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION ■ PLAYERS: 1-2 ■ OUT: OCTOBER

Unless something goes horribly awry, *Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock* will undoubtedly be the best game in the series. The top-notch track list (at least, the ones announced so far) will assure that. Since last issue Activision has announced a further 11 tracks – including a cut from Metallica (especially handy considering *Rock Band* already has a Metallica tune of its own).

It's mostly business as usual for *Guitar Hero III*, and the same sweet multiplayer returns, only with the addition of online support this time around. We've become sceptical about the touted new Battle Mode after a recent hands-on (a competition where

power-ups can be used against a mate to prevent him or her from finishing a song) – it's more frustrating than fun to be honest. The single-player boss battles, however, could have legs. *Guitar Hero III* will feature three epic boss duels – two against famous guitarists and one against a fictional axe master. It's been announced Slash (from Guns N' Roses and Velvet Revolver fame) will feature as one boss, and ol' Slash has apparently let slip that the Devil will be the final boss in a level called Lou's Inferno (Lou = Lucifer? Eh?). That leaves one more, and your guess is as good as ours. Jimi Hendrix? Angus Young? Jimmy Page? Dimebag Darrell? Who knows?



GUITARS

Two different wireless guitars will be available come release – one for PS2 and one for PS3. The PS2 guitar is modelled on the Gibson Kramer, and the PS3 guitar is based on the Gibson Les Paul. The Les Paul has a removable faceplate to allow users to customise it.

WORDS: LUKE REILLY

GUITAR HERO III AND ROCK BAND DUEL IN THE ULTIMATE BATTLE OF THE BANDS!

WISHLIST

After much deliberation, *OPS* has distilled the ultimate list of downloadable albums for *Rock Band* to follow *Who's Next* and *Nevermind*. Harmonix? Get a pen. Readers: let us know what you'd like via the usual channels!

- *Back in Black* – AC/DC
- *Sixteen Stone* – Bush
- *Dookie* – Green Day
- *Appetite for Destruction* – Guns 'N Roses
- *Are You Experienced* – The Jimi Hendrix Experience

- *Led Zeppelin IV* – Led Zeppelin
- *Metallica* – Metallica
- *Capricornia* – Midnight Oil
- *Ten* – Pearl Jam
- *Vulture Street* – Powderfinger
- *Rage Against the Machine* – Rage Against the Machine
- *Blood Sugar Sex Magik* – Red Hot Chili Peppers
- *Frogstomp* – Silverchair
- *Superunknown* – Soundgarden
- *Wolfmother* – Wolfmother



ROCK BAND

■ **DEVELOPER:** HARMONIX ■ **PUBLISHER:** EA ■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4 ■ **OUT:** TBA

Rock Band. The new kid on the block that does everything that *Guitar Hero* does and more.

On-screen, the game is a mix of *Guitar Hero* and *SingStar* (or, perhaps more accurately, Harmonix's own *Karaoke Revolution* series). Guitar, bass and drums scroll down the screen, and the lyrics scroll across the top.

Rock Band will feature support for four players online and offline (and any combination of both) and each player can pick their own difficulty setting. If one person fails their section fades and they have to sit out the rest of

the song, or until a band mate uses their *GH*-equivalent 'star power' to bring them back. If the whole band finishes a song, you'll be rewarded with a colossal free-form jam.

Rock Band will also feature a full character creation system, and you'll be able to build multiple avatars and assign them different instruments. You'll also be able to design your own band logo.

Rock Band will also feature over 40 venues spread across (in alphabetical order) Amsterdam, Berlin, Boston, Chicago, London, LA, Moscow, New York, Paris, Seattle, San Francisco, Sydney and Tokyo and others.

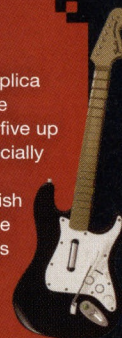
Cost may well be a factor in *Rock Band*'s success, although that remains to be seen. Several US retailers have been taking pre-orders for a pack containing the game, a guitar controller, a drum controller and a microphone for USD199.99 (the items are also listed separately). USD199.99, at the recent

impressive exchange rate, is somewhere around AUD240 – but that's absolutely no guarantee it'll be anywhere near that amount (Sony recently dropped the US PS3 price to USD499 – around AUD570 – but left the European and Australian prices unchanged. At AUD999 Australia is paying nearly twice what the US is paying). For the whole shebang, we could be paying around \$300 (or more) for the full *Rock Band* experience. Of course, you don't have to buy the lot, it's reportedly compatible with *Guitar Hero* controllers and, lastly, EA has dismissed these prices as "pure speculation" anyway.

The only real problem with *Rock Band* is that it's likely not coming out in Australia until around March 2008. It's going to be absolutely agonising having to wait an extra four months after the US – but the amount of downloadable content that will be available by the time it releases here should be staggering.

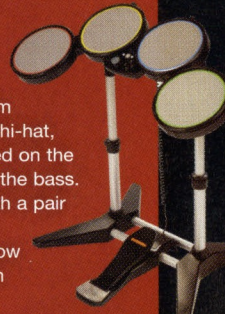
GUITAR

The *Rock Band* guitar is a 3/4 replica of a Fender Stratocaster with five regular fret buttons and another five up high (you'll use those during specially designed solo sections). The buttons all have a faux-wood finish to blend in with the neck, and the colours are depicted on the sides of the neck. It also features a whammy bar and a five-way switch for in-game effects like wah, flange and reverb.



DRUMS

The drum peripheral consists of four pads and a kick pedal. The left pad is the snare drum and the rest will vary as hi-hat, toms and cymbals (based on the song). The kick pedal is the bass. The drums will come with a pair of wooden drumsticks, and you'll be able to throw in your own fills between phrases.



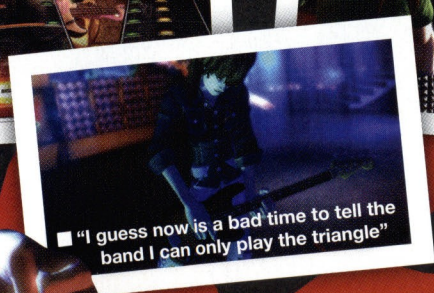
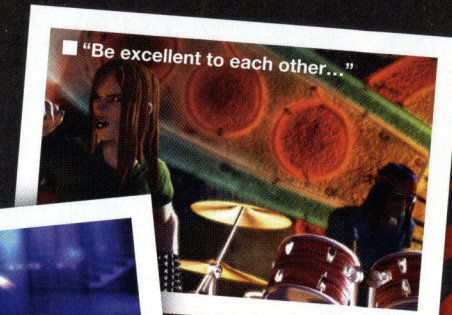
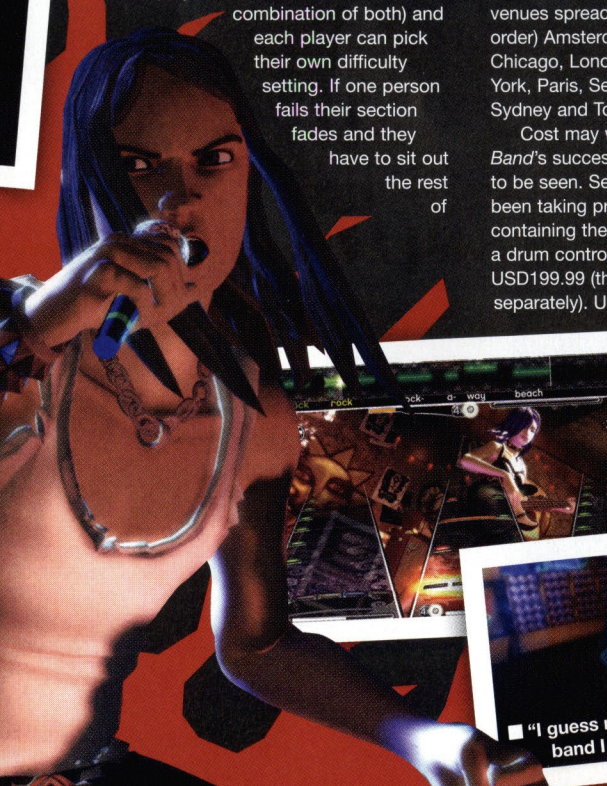
MICROPHONE

Nothing too fancy, but it'll double as a tambourine, cowbell or other percussive instrument for you to tap along during instrumental sections. Other USB mics will be supported. Harmonix is considering a version with a stand for possible later release.



EXTRA CONTENT

Who's Next from The Who and *Nevermind* by Nirvana will be the first full albums available to download shortly after *Rock Band*'s release. *Who's Next* was ranked 28th in *Rolling Stone*'s greatest albums of all time. *Nevermind* was ranked 17th. You will be able to purchase individual songs as well as the entire albums. Content will be released weekly, alternating between full albums and collections of select songs.



ONLINE

The latest PS3 Network news, online reviews, reader online section and more!

WHAT'S NEW?

The latest PlayStation Store goodies

Accessing overseas PlayStation Stores

It's important to know that you don't have to get by with just the downloads on the Australian PS Store. You can setup overseas profiles on your PS3 and simply sign in as them to access the extra content available on the US and Hong Kong stores. To do this simply set up a new profile and enter an American or Hong Kong address. This way when you access the store using this profile you will be taken to the overseas stores. What's also cool is that once you start a download from an overseas store, you can switch back to your main Australian profile, start playing a game, and it will continue to download the content you started with a different profile.



Australian Store

The Aussie store is absolutely jam-packed with great content this month. It may be a painfully brief teaser (roughly five minute's worth) but the *Heavenly Sword* demo is still an essential download. You'd also be crazy if you didn't nab the *GRAV2* and *The Darkness* demos – both of which cram in plenty of content. In terms of new trailers, the extended *Resident Evil 5* video is the pick of the bunch, and will firmly dislocate your jaw, but the *Heavenly Sword*, *Gran Turismo 5*, *Juiced 2* and *Lair* videos are worth a look. You can also check out the first music videos ever on the PS Store, with Brooke Fraser's 'Deciphering Me' and TV Rock's 'The Others'.

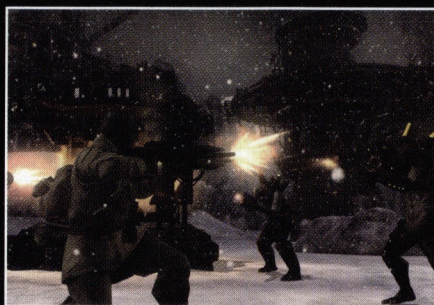


USA Store

The US store continues to offer great movie trailers. This month there's a great haul with high-def trailers of *10,000 B.C.*, *Resident Evil: Extinction*, *I Am Legend*, *Get Smart*, *30 Days of Night* and the second trailers for *Superbad* and *Fred Claus*. Don't forget the grab the *MGS4* gameplay video too.

Resistance Reader Rumble Recap

Post-carnage report



MAP VOTE
REGAMING 21

PLAYER	Score	Kills	Deaths
1 [PRO]RESISTANCE7	252	24	15
2 [R]FIDHAGG	248	22	13
3 Nickhant90	240	22	10
4 [GB]Jvottagunn	238	21	10
5 Gerra66	218	20	14
6 [LOR]Legend501	202	17	10
7 The Duke	200	18	13
8 [LPR]NikJost5	200	16	15
9 Capt_Pischokeart	192	17	11
10 Assassin_Killer	192	15	14
11 [AAU]Apollo69	188	14	18

5 Gerra66 218 20 14

If your neighbourhood rang with the sound of random gunfire, explosions and uncontrollable swearing on the 25th of July that's because the OPS vs. readers *Resistance* night was getting busy. Considering it was the first event of its kind, the night kicked off with surprisingly few teething problems, mostly thanks to the OPS team's practise run the night before – allowing us to nab the patience-crippling 50 minute download of the latest firmware and *Resistance* patches ahead of time. Seriously, Sony, you need to get those lengthy updates sorted.

The first game of the night was an OPS regular: Bus Yard, with LAARKS, Bullseyes and Carbines. Laser-guided rocketry death rained down mercilessly on anyone foolish enough to wander into the middle of the map.

While we enjoyed a few more brilliant deathmatches in the close-quarters Grimsby and Bus Yard maps, as more and more readers joined the party we needed to keep shifting to bigger maps to cater for them all. This led to an initially fantastic 40-player game of Breach, with OPS staffers and readers split across both teams. The excitement dwindled towards the end though, because strong defence from both teams led to a deadlock that pushed the match out to nearly an hour. As the carnage cleared the OPS boys had distinguished themselves well but top honours were awarded to Resistance7 for his Terminator-like precision gunning. We'd like to throw out a big thanks to all the readers who made the night such terrific fun.

OPS vs. Readers: Warhawk

See you there – 27/09/07



A preview copy of *Warhawk* recently landed in the office and we've been giving it a thorough

thrashing over the past week. With fighter jets, tanks, jeeps, mounted guns AND third-person shooting all somehow crammed into the one dose of deathmatching, it's almost more than we can wrap our feeble minds around.

This game's got everything. It's like going on a date with Jessica Alba and finding out she's also a dirty-talking, beer-loving, videogames junkie. If any of this sounds like your bag, grab yourself a copy of *Warhawk* and look for the OPS boys online 8pm Thursday September 27. This is, of course, assuming *Warhawk* sticks to its tentative release date of September 20. If it's delayed we'll sort out a new time in the following issue for a match in October. See you there.

OPS READER SECTION

Get your game on with other OPS readers

Assasin_Killer – Resistance
BfFaLcOn_2007 – Resistance
Blackadder_05 – Resistance
bounti – MotorStorm
Cam4v – Resistance
Cosgrove – Resistance
EBK – MotorStorm

iriquois – Resistance
Jaz12 – Resistance
Jase619 – Resistance
Malifican – MotorStorm
MrTerminator – Resistance
Phoenixavenger – Resistance
PSIress – Resistance

Shags666 – Resistance
sir_gazman – Resistance
Stinkfire – Resistance
SuperSmashBros – Resistance
tails-4 – Rainbow Six Vegas
turbo180 – Resistance
Vauto – Resistance

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Magic: The Gathering competition

To help get you started Wizards of the Coast is offering *OPS* readers the chance to win five Magic: The Gathering Theme decks plus \$100 PlayStation game packs. For your chance to win simply tell us how many registered players there are world wide, then send the answer to us marked 'Magic Giveaway'. Follow the entry instructions on page 16.

WIN
5 THEME DECKS
AND \$100
PLAYSTATION
GAME PACKS!

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PlayStation 2

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Journey to the edge of the galaxy...
and beyond the law.
Coming September 2007

PG

Mild
Violence

PlayStation 2



roguegalaxygame.com

THIS MONTH'S RELEASES PUT TO THE TEST

REVIEWS



WELCOME

The bar has well and truly been raised – and before you ask, my pants don't enter the equation. We're talking about the level of quality that PS3 games are nudging these days. Games that were great a few months

ago are being rendered sloppy by this new herd of contenders. So that's it – the kid gloves are off and we're taking no prisoners. Watch this space next month for *OPS*' new and refreshed review ratings and what they stand for.

LUKE REILLY
Reviews Editor

REVIEW RATINGS

Here's what our review scores stand for:

- 10/10** High on revolutionary. A game that could change the face of gaming forever
- 09/10** A truly astonishing game. Essential fare
- 08/10** Highly recommended
- 07/10** Good, solid fare that's well worth a look
- 06/10** Better than average, and acceptable for hardcore fans of the genre
- 05/10** An average game, probably not a lot to recommend here
- 04/10** Poor, but still with the odd moment
- 03/10** Extremely disappointing
- 02/10** To be avoided
- 01/10** Beer coaster

THE OPS AWARDS

We don't hand out high scores for nothing, so when you see one of these, you'll know it's a sign of quality. Look for them on game boxes.



The Gold Award is a rare gem and only to be given to games that score that magic 10/10. This score indicates gaming of simply incredible quality!



The Silver Award is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!



The Bronze Award is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

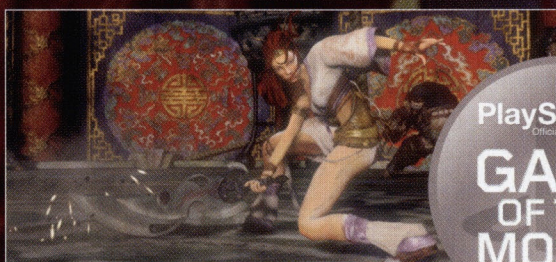
OPS REVIEW SETUP



We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Bravia X-series for the best picture possible. This sucker melts eyeballs...

"...leap in the air, grab your enemy with the sword's chains and pile-drive the poor sap, headfirst into the ground, with your foot crushing his groin like a cinderblock landing on a bowl of fruit." page 60

PS3



PlayStation®
Official Magazine - Australia
GAME OF THE MONTH

HEAVENLY SWORD

Did it hurt when this game fell from heaven? – page 60

- John Woo's Stranglehold
- Stuntman: Ignition
- Colin McRae: DIRT
- Lair

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PS2



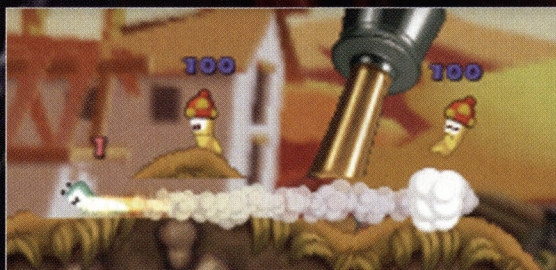
RUGBY 08

Worth giving a ruck? – page 78

- SingStar '90s
- Surf's Up
- Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam
- Atelier Iris 3: Grand Phantasm

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p82

PSP



WORMS: OPEN WARFARE 2

Got worms? – page 84

- Capcom Puzzle World

p.84

■ **GENRE:** ACTION/ADVENTURE
■ **RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2007
■ **DEVELOPER:** NINJA THEORY
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY

■ **PLAYERS:** 1
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95
■ **HD:** 720p
■ **WEB:** www.heavenlysword.com

■ **BACK STORY:** Like a lot of PS3-only games there has been much hype about *Heavenly Sword*. To be frank the all-too-brief playable demo left us with concerns. Was the game a dirty, drooling dog in hot chick's clothing? Read on, dear gamer, and all will be revealed.

HEAVENLY SWORD

The sword comes from heaven, ready to unleash HELL!

PlayStation
SILVER AWARD
9/10

Legend tells of an evil warlord who slew, pillaged and spread his dark influence across the land. This cat was so nasty he'd cleft you in twain as soon as look at you. Then, apparently, a heavenly warrior descended from the sky. In his hands he held a weapon of great power: the Heavenly Sword.

This airborne badarse swiftly kicked eleven kinds of shit out of said warlord but when the dust of battle cleared... only the sword remained. The warrior had vanished.

Before you could say, "Bags it!" warriors, righteous and nasty alike tried to take the weapon. As the years passed men killed, slaughtered and were generally unpleasant to one another – all in an effort to own the sword and wield its mighty power.

Man – being the imperfect creature he is – could not handle the sword and all that it could do, and what started out as a blessing soon became a

blight. What once was a source of light and hope became a blood soaked blade, ripped mercilessly from many a twitching, dying hand.

Eventually a clan of warriors, led by the wise elder Shen, took the sword and hid it – knowing a mere mortal could not brandish such a weapon. According to their clan's prophecies a mighty warrior would be born to Shen, a man who could wield the sword. But woe – when the sprog came unto this earth it was a girl: Nariko. Much wailing and gnashing of teeth ensued – and poor Nariko was considered a curse upon Shen's clan.

HEFTY BIT OF EXPOSITION THERE, TIGER?

Indeed. And that's just the set up for *Heavenly Sword* – which can be seen in the excellent animations you can unlock in game or download from the PlayStation Store. The story actually starts with Shen, Nariko and Kai and the rest of the clan fleeing.

See, another evil despot – Bohan – now reigns supreme with his dastardly army of human and some not-quite-so-human warriors.

Kai – an 18-year-old with an eerie, childlike manner – knows only too well how vicious Bohan can be. She's the soul survivor of her clan. Orphaned by one of Bohan's creepy lieutenants, Flying Fox. Nariko adopted her as a "little sister" after finding her on the blood soaked battlefield.

And so *Heavenly Sword* opens with Nariko – now a stunningly beautiful woman, with long red hair that flows through the air in crimson tendrils – and clan fighting off Bohan's forces.

Without giving too much of the plot away; Nariko, through a series of events, ends up wielding the heavenly sword. In fact, in a rather Tarantino-esque move, the game starts at the end with Nariko fighting off a literal army of warriors with the Heavenly Sword... and succumbing to its unpleasant caveat. You see if you

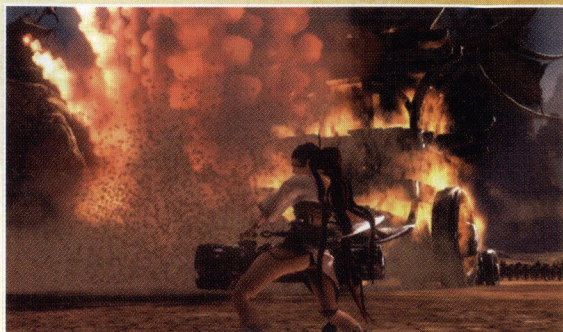
wield the sword for too long, it demands a rather steep price: your life. So the game starts with Nariko's death – and then we flashback five days and see how we reach that tragic end... and perhaps find a way to change it.

DOES SHE GO ALRIGHT?

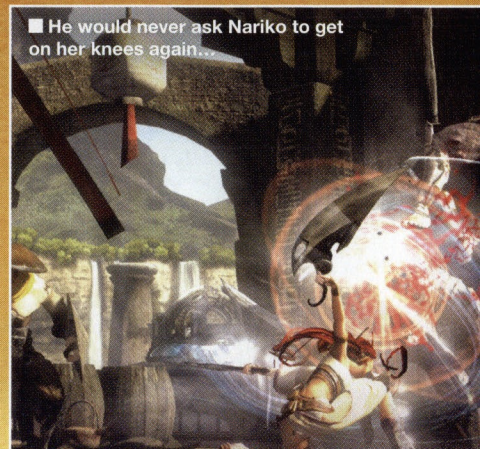
We don't normally go into such depth with the storylines of games because, well, most games are: "You're a dude/chick in space/WWII/New York. Now shoot/punch/slice those enemies." *Heavenly Sword*, on the other hand, is a nuanced, beautifully crafted masterpiece of story, mood and graphics.

But graphics and a good yarn don't make the game, the gameplay does. Happily *Heavenly Sword* has some of the best we've seen.

■ "Damn it! I've chopped off my own hair again. I really need to hit the hairdressers..."



■ He would never ask Nariko to get on her knees again...







“You can throw a screaming soldier off one of the many cliffs and kick up a sword into your hand and chuck it at your enemy, watching its progress the whole way.”

Sure it mimics *God of War* and *Prince of Persia* in some ways, but so what? Those were excellent games – besides which *Heavenly Sword* has many unique elements that are sure to delight.


SISTERS ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES

The rather stern, but noble – despite the fact everyone thinks she's a curse – Nariko is who you'll play as throughout the majority of the game. After a little bit of business at the start she's wielding the Heavenly Sword and crikey, that bad boy packs a punch! It has three modes of attack. There's the standard mode – where you wield two smaller swords,


heavy mode – where you slash out with the big, bad sword, and a third mode that sees you spinning spiked chains around your head like a stoned fire twirler at Nimbin.

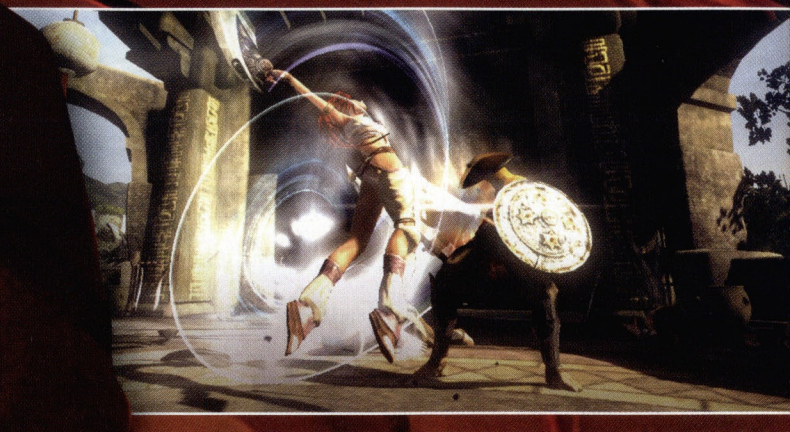
You have quick but weaker attack with the  button and stronger, but slower attack, with . This may sound limiting but when you combine attack modes, shake the controller (the SIXAXIS is vital in this game) and go for the combos you will pull off some truly amazing-looking moves.

You also fill up a rage bar every time you hack and slash your way through a bunch of enemies. This fills up to three extra special moves activated by

pressing . One lit circle on the bar sees you jumping on your enemy and snapping their neck, two circles throws them to the ground and shoves a sword in their gut meats and three circles, well, you leap in the air, grab your enemy with the sword's chains and pile-drive the poor sap, headfirst into the ground, with your foot crushing his groin like a cinderblock landing on a bowl of fruit.

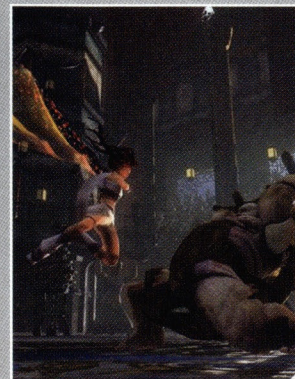
The latter attack is so powerful that nearby enemies will be knocked off their feet. And the more strength you acquire throughout the game, the more mighty these special attacks become.

Finally the  button picks up things. Like, say, a body, a piece of fruit, a



BUST A MOVE, & SOME SACRED GENITALS!

Taking cues from *RE4* and *Spider-Man 3*, *Heavenly Sword* has some beautiful sequences where you have to press the right button at the right time. It's a lot more forgiving than *Spidey* so you won't go breaking your wrist just to pull off a finishing move on a boss. Also a lot of the kicking seems to be aimed at men's groins. Very crotch-centric, this game. Not a bad thing – we're just saying.



sword or even a chunk of broken table from the almost completely destructible environments. So what, you say? Well, when you throw said man/fruit/sword or table chunk and keep your finger pressed down you'll actually follow the path of what you've thrown. Not only that, you can control its trajectory with the SIXAXIS.

This leads to some awesome moments where you can throw a screaming soldier off one of the many cliffs and kick up a sword into your hand and chuck it at your enemy, watching its progress the whole way.

The fighting is fast and furious and at first you may feel overwhelmed. It's no exaggeration that at times you'll be fighting 10-20 or more foes at once. That's where the counter moves come into it. The soldiers flash certain colours when they're busting out the big moves against Nariko, and each colour corresponds to the stance required to block the attack. But if you can't be

bothered with that jibba jabba, then a well timed press of **(A)** will cause you to counter, breaking their neck and hurling the nasty fellow in question at his mates. There are a bunch of really cool looking counter moves, most of them involving neck-snapping, groin-kicking or just flat out hurling people. Although it looks similar to *GoW* or *PoP* it's a quite unique system that, once you get the hang of it, has some truly thrilling combat moments.

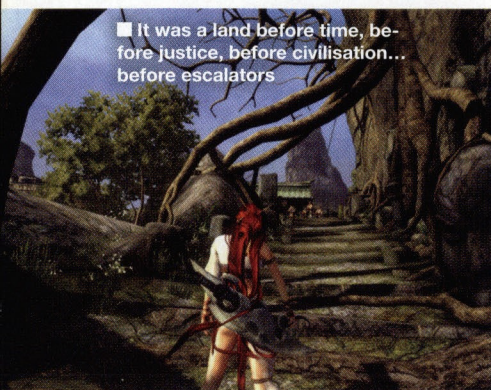
BUT IT'S NOT ALL KICKY/PUNCHY, SOME OF IT'S TWING TWANG!

Remember a few paragraphs back when we mentioned you play Nariko through the "majority" of the game? Good for you. We said that because in some sections you play the delightfully kooky Kai and her love of the game "twing twang". What's twing twang? It's a game Kai plays with her pump-action crossbow. She's no melee fighter, but hide her somewhere and she can shoot arrows at her enemies

■ That sword is perilously close to Nariko's buttcheeks... come on! How can we *not* comment!

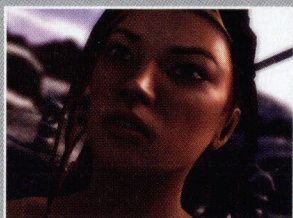


■ It was a land before time, before justice, before civilisation... before escalators



STYLE, CHARACTER AND SCREENS WITHIN SCREENS

Such is the skill of facial expression mapping, and dialogue delivery, you'll find yourself really wanting to kill some of the game's bosses. Flying Fox in particular is an evil bastard. Another cool feature is the picture-in-picture. When something is going on that you should focus on, the screen splits, ala 24, showing a close-up of an enemy in the distance, a gate you just opened or some trouble that's coming your way. This game has style and substance by the truckload.

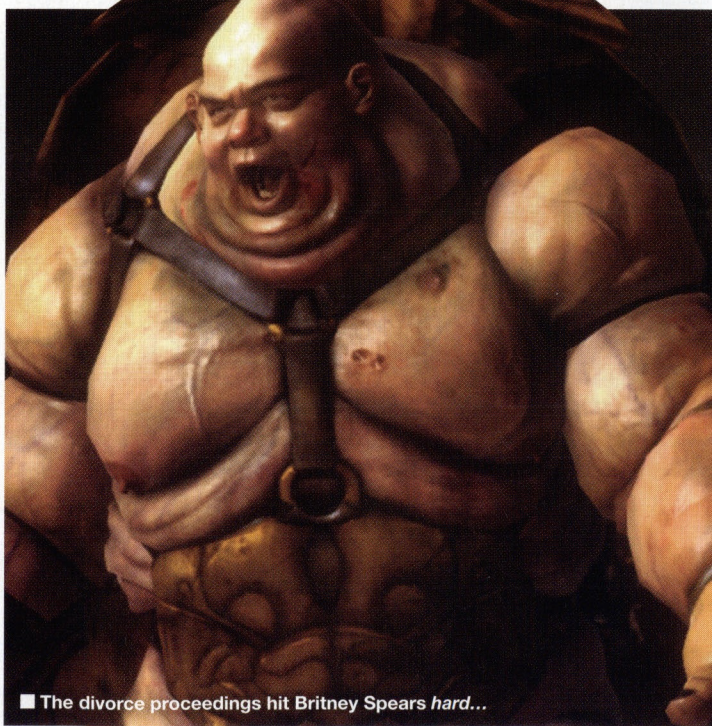


INFO BYTE

Sharp-eyed campers who are also fans of the show *Heroes* will have noticed the kid-who-can-control-machines was actually playing *Heavenly Sword* with his dad on an episode of the show. How did the kid get it so early? Maybe he went forward in time with Hiro... probably not, though.



■ Kirstie Alley's personal trainer had a helluva job on her hands this time...



■ The divorce proceedings hit Britney Spears hard...

with great accuracy. But that's not the staggeringly cool bit. If you keep the fire button pressed down you can follow the arrow and indeed move it with the SIXAXIS. There are so many memorable moments with Kai and her crossbow, we wouldn't want to ruin them, but we'll give you this: in one section Kai has to cross a deep canyon in a cable car. The problem is soldiers are shooting arrows at her from both sides of the great divide. Now, time does slow down when you're in arrow POV mode, but you can also take out these suckers en masse.

Simply shoot an arrow through one of the many flaming candles, or fires, that pepper the game and you've got yourself a flaming arrow. Aim said burning

projectile at the explosives behind the cadre of soldiers and watch some truly beautiful fireworks! What's most impressive about

Kai's combat is it never gets repetitive – you're always expected to shoot with more and more accuracy. Hell,

DON'T JUST RIP UP THE TRACK TEAR IT A NEW ONE



Actual in-game screenshot

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■ Discos in the 10th century: brutal yet 'flashy'. And hitting on chicks is a big no-no



at one point the cable car breaks and you have to shoot at Bohan's army of scumbags upside down! At another you have to shoot through a teensy, weensy slot in a door after first setting the arrow on fire.

Rather than frustrate this just makes you want to explore the range of Kai's attacks - her levels are some of the best in the game.

WHAT ABOUT THE RED HEAD?

That's not to take away from Nariko. She has some awesome levels too. She can wield a handheld ye olde bazooka and follow its deadly ordinance. She also (wo)mans a cannon from time to time - and believe us when we say firing on

as Bohan - as the little touches and intonation make all of the cast feel real. And we defy anyone not to laugh out loud when he talks about his sacred genitals...

SO IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH THIS GAME?

Sadly, yes. Occasionally the camera makes some rather odd, choices but that's a minor quibble. The real problem is: *Heavenly Sword* will take the average gamer 6-10 hours to complete. It's just not very long, nor is it particularly hard.

It's insanely enjoyable when you're playing it, but you might catch yourself fighting the last boss before you know it. And paying just under \$100 for such a short game may stick in people's craws.

"We defy anyone not to laugh out loud when he talks about his sacred genitals..."

a massive army, replete with lumbering catapults and explosives, is nothing short of gaming genius. Plus there are a few puzzle sequences where Nariko must fling shields at various targets to progress. These can be tricky, but again - they never really have you hurling controllers or kicking the cat.

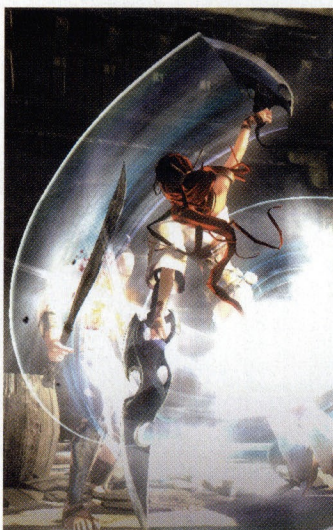
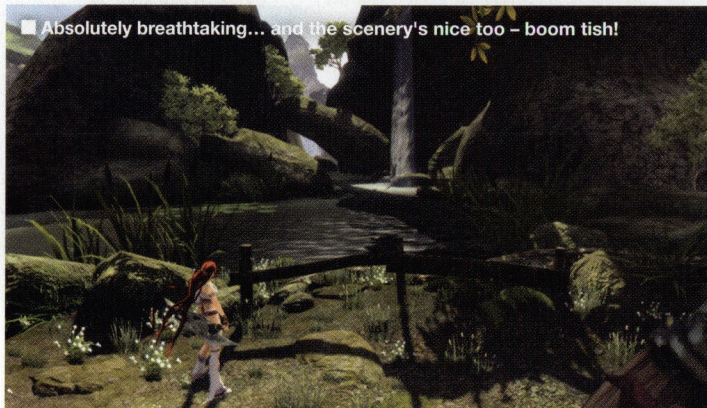
AND THE NOMINEES ARE...

Other than the tight, varied gameplay, jaw-dropping graphics and interesting story we have the acting in the game. Oh yes, we said acting. Andy (Golem, Kong from *King Kong*) Serkis directs himself and a group of similarly talented actors. Never has a game seen such golden performances, garnished with subtle asides, facial twitches and a unprecedented expressiveness that is quite simply brilliant. They should award the man an Oscar for his performance

Although, when you think about it, a special edition DVD retails anywhere from \$35-50 and that's only a movie. But it has to be said: *Heavenly Sword* doesn't represent good value for money. Ironically when you beat it you can unlock Hell difficulty which, to be honest, would have been a more suitable default difficulty.

Having said all that, we heartily recommend *Heavenly Sword*. It's the most fun we've had playing a game in ages. Plus each checkpoint can be played again and each one has a three medal reward system. We found ourselves going back, trying to get three gold medals for every level. It's the kind of game you'll play more than once - it's so much fun. \$100 worth of fun? That's between you and your wallet, but *Heavenly Sword* is a spectacular PS3 game that will give you an awesomely enjoyable ride, albeit a rather short one. **■ Anthony O'Connor**

■ Absolutely breathtaking... and the scenery's nice too - boom tish!



PROS:

- Slick, beautiful graphics
- Refined combat system

CONS:

- Occasionally wonky camera
- It's a rather short adventure

VERDICT: One of the best games we've seen in ages, a beautiful, yet deep, masterpiece.

OFFICIAL
SCORE:

09

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■ **GENRE:** ACTION
 ■ **RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2007
 ■ **DEVELOPER:** MIDWAY CHICAGO
 ■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** RED ANT

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-8
 ■ **PRICE:** \$119.95
 ■ **HD:** 720p
 ■ **WEB:** www.midway.com

■ **BACK STORY:** Harnessing the trademark 'bullet ballet' style of acclaimed Hong Kong action film director John Woo, *Stranglehold* sees Chow Yun-Fat reprising the role of Inspector 'Tequila' Yuen in another series of blood-soaked shootouts.

■ "You are the ugliest man I've ever seen" "That's not what your mum said" "My mum's dead" BLAM!

STRANGLEHOLD

Does Woo choke out the opposition, or just choke?

With *Stranglehold* being one of the first PS3 titles announced, it's enjoyed its share of the limelight for a good while. Fans of Hong Kong action films have been slaving at the thought of a true sequel to the Chow Yun-Fat classic *Hard Boiled*, and Midway has been working on delivering that high-calibre continuation in videogame form. So is *Stranglehold* up there with Woo's greats like *The Killer* and *A Better Tomorrow*, or down in the dirt with duds like *Blackjack* and that dodgy Van Damme flick?

DOUBLE SHOT

When you first get to grips with controlling Tequila, you'll be pleasantly surprised with how agile he is. Not only is the good Inspector blessed with a fast feet, but he can also run along railings, slide across tables and, of course, partake in his patented headlong dives, all while unleashing a barrage of hot lead. If you're feeling particularly tricky, you can even handspring off walls or swing from chandeliers to really get the drop on the baddies. If you're under heavy fire, you

can kick over tables or just huddle up against a wall for cover. The cover system isn't quite as good as the one used in *Rainbow Six Vegas*, but considering the temporary nature of cover in *Stranglehold*, it's understandable.

Probably the strangest thing that you'll encounter while playing is that despite a range of abilities and interactions, Tequila can't jump. This becomes particularly noticeable when you occasionally come across a waist-

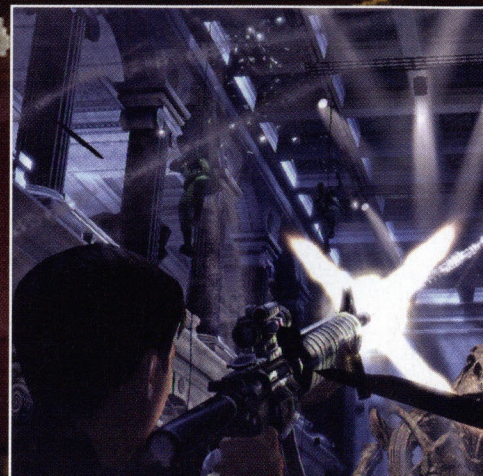
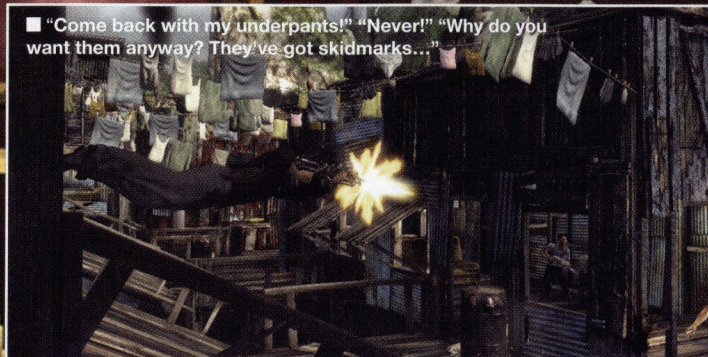
high railing that you can't interact with, and your only option is to dive across it and incur the recovery penalty. It's not really a game-breaker by any definition, but is an odd design decision nonetheless.

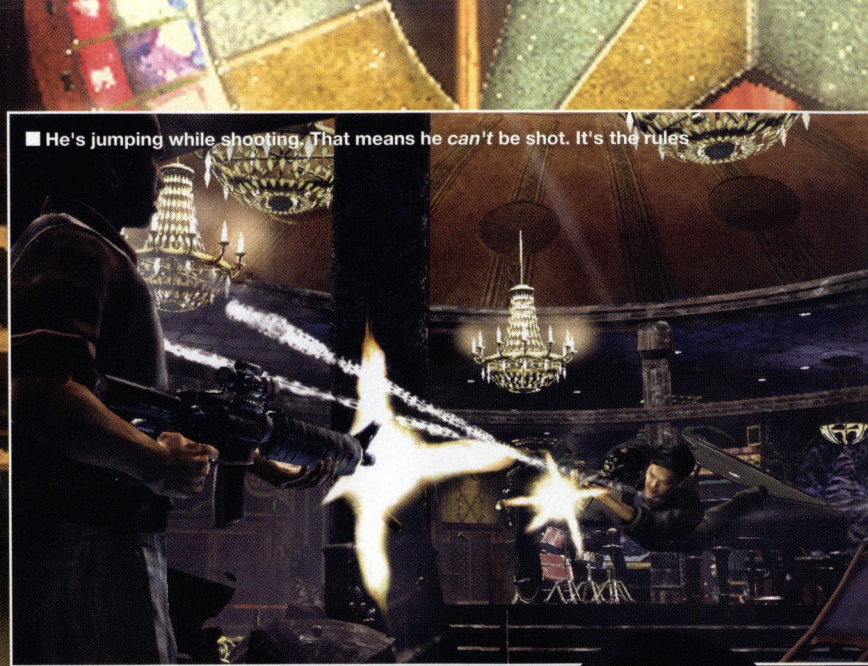
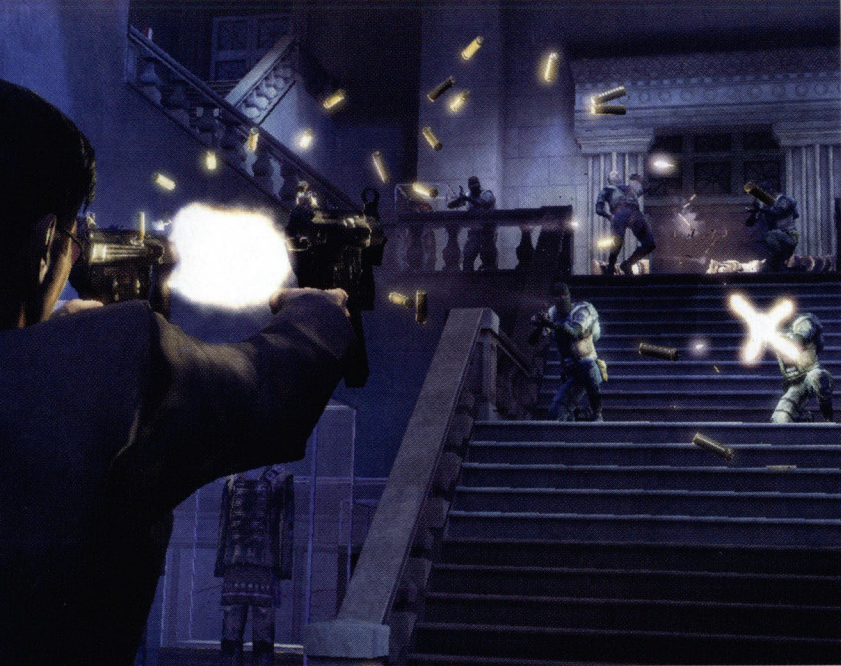
A SHOT ACROSS THE BOW

As you'd expect, a key part of John Woo's directorial style is the use of slow motion, and *Stranglehold* adapts this to the game via 'Tequila Time', letting

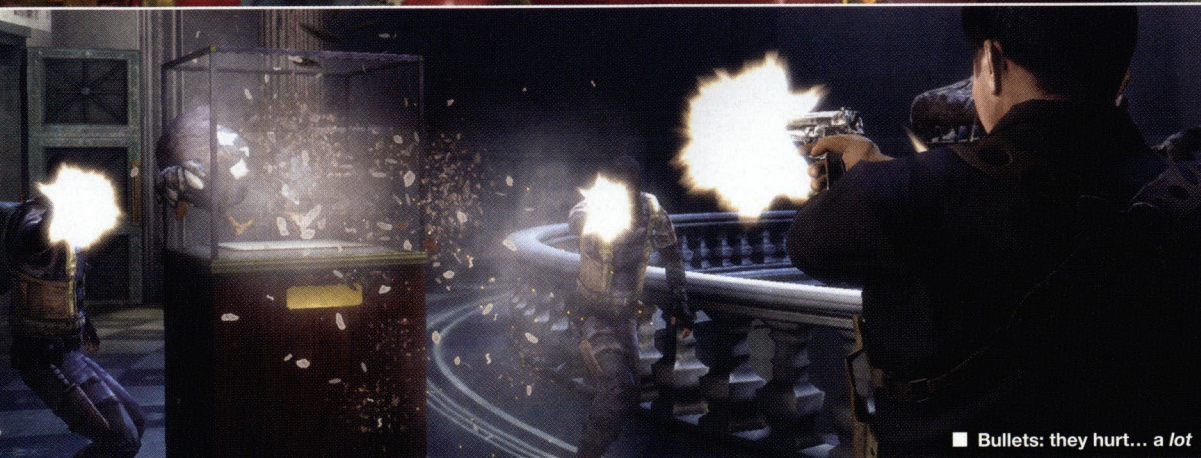
the player slow down time to give the advantage of heightened reflexes and sharper aim over his enemies. Tequila has a fixed amount of Tequila Time at his disposal (around five seconds if used all at once), but it regenerates when not in use. By default, Tequila Time automatically activates in certain circumstances when targeting enemies, which sounds good in theory, but is a little too inconsistent to allow you a steady shot. In the end, you're much better off dealing with it

■ "Come back with my underpants!" "Never!" "Why do you want them anyway? They've got skidmarks..."





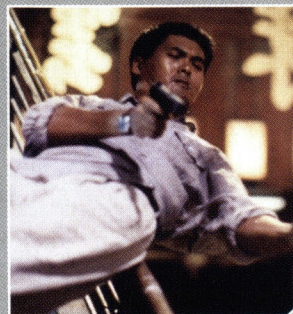
■ He's jumping while shooting. That means he can't be shot. It's the rules



■ Bullets: they hurt... a lot

SHOT DOWN

In a previous issue, we reported that the collector's edition *Stranglehold* would be shipping with the movie *Hard Boiled* on the same Blu-ray disc. While US gamers get to enjoy this supreme pack-in, sadly this package won't be getting a local release. We can only speculate that there were licensing complications with the business that holds the rights to distribute *Hard Boiled* locally, but you'd have to say that *Stranglehold* would have shipped a lot more units had they managed to sort it out.



manually, even if it does involve juggling an extra button.

As you're wiping out waves of Triads and Russian mobsters, the game awards you a rating for each kill, based on how stylishly you've performed it. For example, popping off a few rounds into a thug's chest will receive a minimal rating, while a bloody sequence of headshotting three guys while sliding down a banister, taking out another five while swinging from a chandelier and then decimating another dozen by detonating a backyard speed lab with a

few well placed shots will score a huge swag of points.

CALLING THE SHOTS

Other than granting you bragging rights, your stylish kills also fill up a meter, allowing Tequila to perform a range of 'super moves' called Tequila Bombs, with each one dishing a greater serving of Woo-style ownage than the one before. The first Tequila Bomb allows you to simply trade some meter for a health top up. There are first aid kits scattered around the levels, but in the fiercest fire

fight, having the ability to get a quick health boost on demand is invaluable.

The second Bomb is Precision Aim, that basically boils down to a clever way of eliminating a sniper rifle from the arsenal. Using this ability lets Tequila fire a single shot from a zoomed perspective, making it great to clear out distant snipers. To pay tribute to Woo's visceral stylings, the camera follows the bullet as it spirals towards its target, and shows the unfortunate thug's demise in gory detail, giving you a great appreciation for the superb death

animations that Midway has put together.

The third and probably most commonly used Tequila Bomb is the Barrage. Triggering this skill gives a brief cut-scene of Tequila viciously loading ammunition into his firearm and then grants you a 10 second killing spree where you have not only infinite ammo and an increased rate of fire, but also total invincibility. This Bomb is an absolute godsend, and will be your go-to whenever you become utterly overwhelmed in frantic shootouts.

The last and ultimate Tequila Bomb is the Spin Attack, which lets loose a 360-degree burst of lead-flavoured death, decimating all foes within a certain range. Accompanied with strikingly contrasting pan pipe music as Woo is want to do, the Spin Attack is a prime example of the genius director's 'ballet of violence', as you bear witness to cuts of Tequila putting

an end to the mobsters. While it's clearly the coolest Tequila Bomb, you won't bust out the Spin Attack too often, as it eats the most meter and without knowing that you're truly surrounded by baddies, you're generally better off opting for the more economical Barrage.

Putting Tequila's talents into practise, the general flow of play becomes a matter of using your Tequila Time to perform stylish kills, and in turn using the generated Tequila Bombs to get through the tougher parts. This is a pretty solid foundation for the gun-toting gameplay, but you do find yourself really rationing your limited Tequila Time. For a game that encourages you to perform as

many impressive feats in a row as you can, being restricted by a relatively short supply of Tequila Time can be a little frustrating and we can't help but feel that awarding small Tequila Time boosts for kills mid-combo would add a great deal of depth to the game.

GIVE IT A SHOT

At first glance, it'd be easy to dismiss *Stranglehold* as pretty standard in the visual stakes, particularly in the early levels. There are some fairly ordinary textures, the character designs are uninspired and the frame-rate can be a little inconsistent when the action picks up. The thing you need to bear in mind

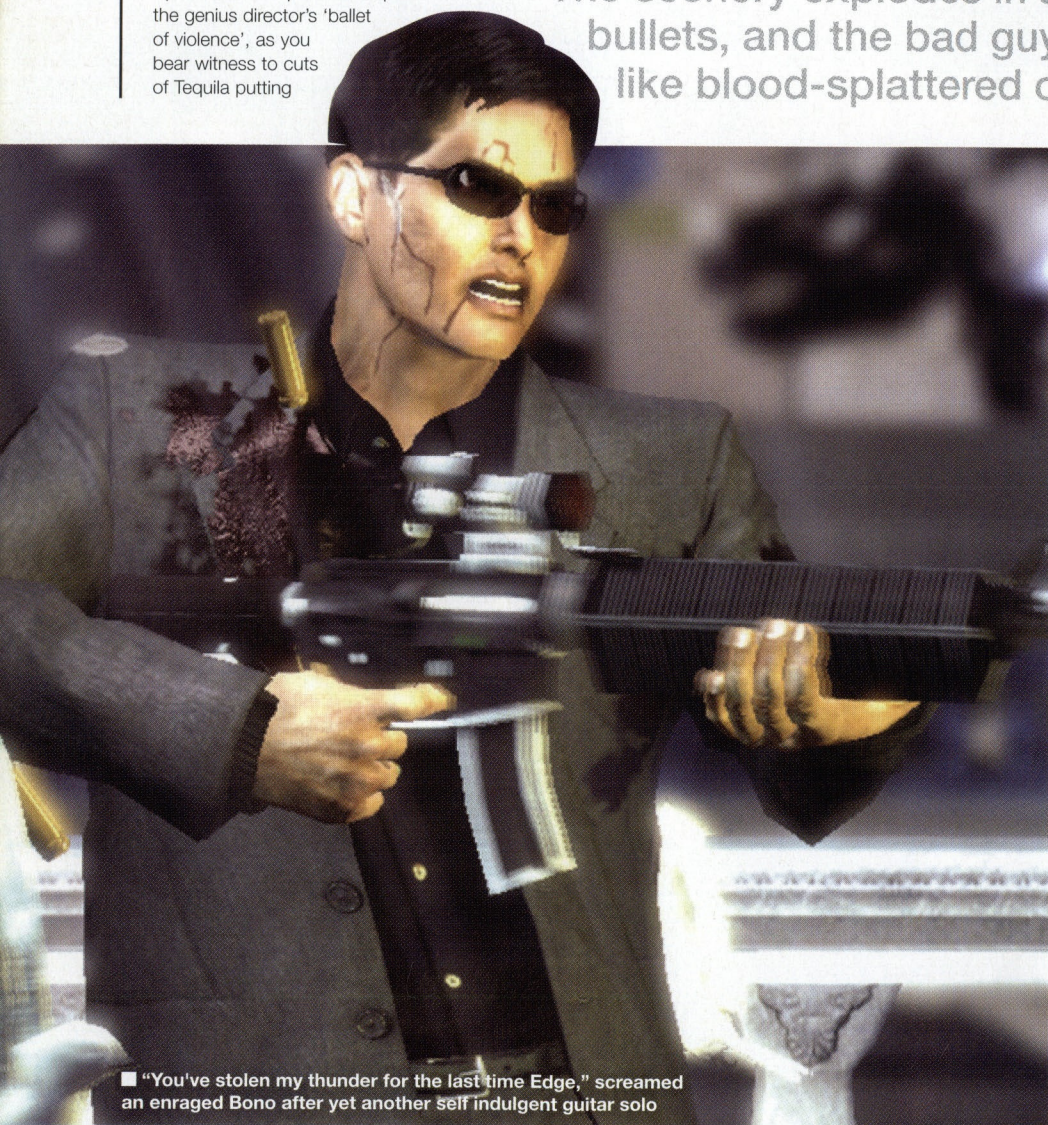
though is that *Stranglehold* is not a creature that is best appreciated from a static view. Under the filtered effects of Tequila Time, when the scenery explodes in a hail of bullets, and the bad guys fold up like blood-splattered origami, you gain a true appreciation for the developer's ultimate vision.

HOW DO I SHOT DUAL BERETTAS?

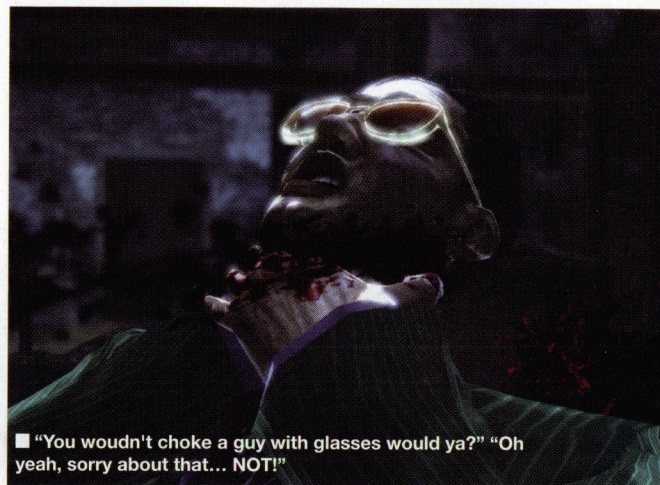
While the goons in action movies are little more than walking bullet-sponges, the AI in *Stranglehold* is actually pretty decent. While some foes are purposefully made to stay in place to snipe or be unfortunately positioned beneath looming environmental hazards, you definitely see a decent variety of behaviours from your enemies, with some charging in with all guns blazing, while others will cautiously take sneaky pot shots from behind cover.

Boss battles, on the other hand, are a fairly vanilla process. They tend to revolve around making use of the appropriate

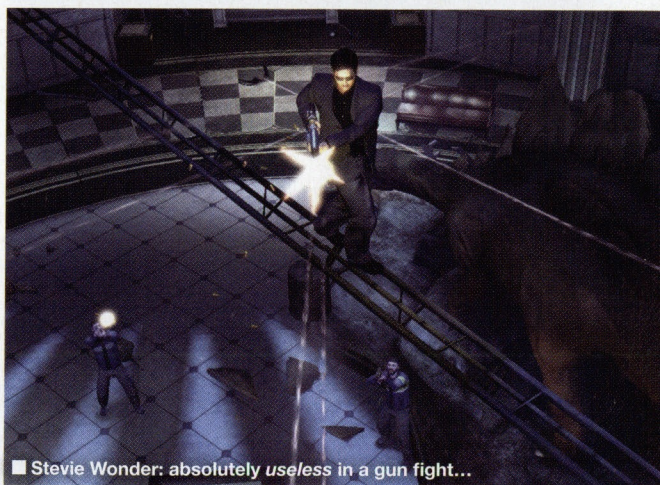
"The scenery explodes in a hail of bullets, and the bad guys fold up like blood-splattered origami..."



■ "You've stolen my thunder for the last time Edge," screamed an enraged Bono after yet another self indulgent guitar solo



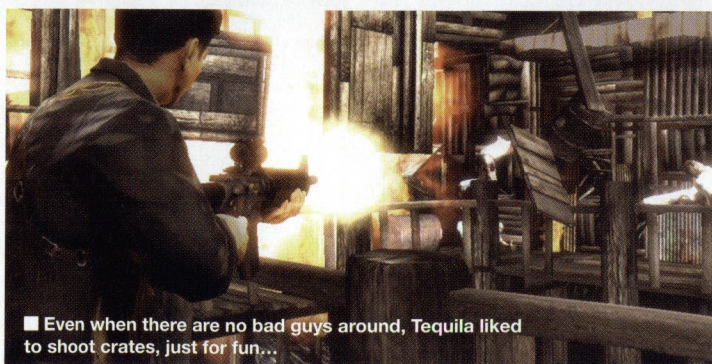
■ "You wouldn't choke a guy with glasses would ya?" "Oh yeah, sorry about that... NOT!"



■ Stevie Wonder: absolutely useless in a gun fight...



■ "Man, these 5000 watt lightbulbs really work"



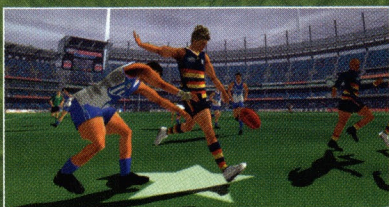
■ Even when there are no bad guys around, Tequila liked to shoot crates, just for fun...



PREMIERSHIP 2007



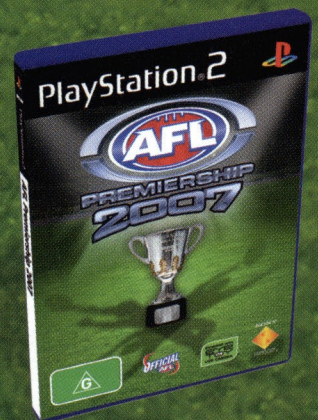
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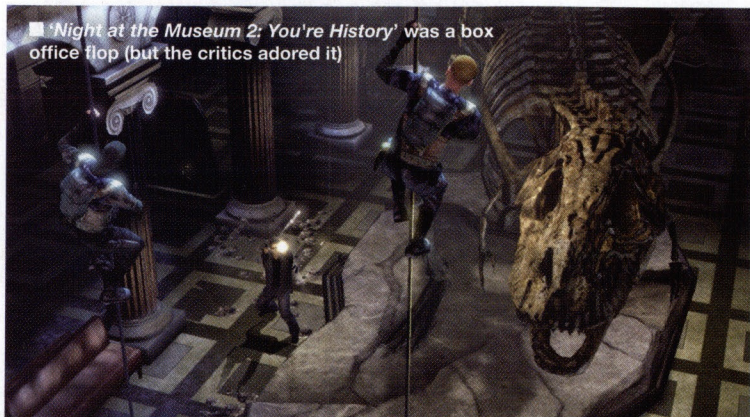
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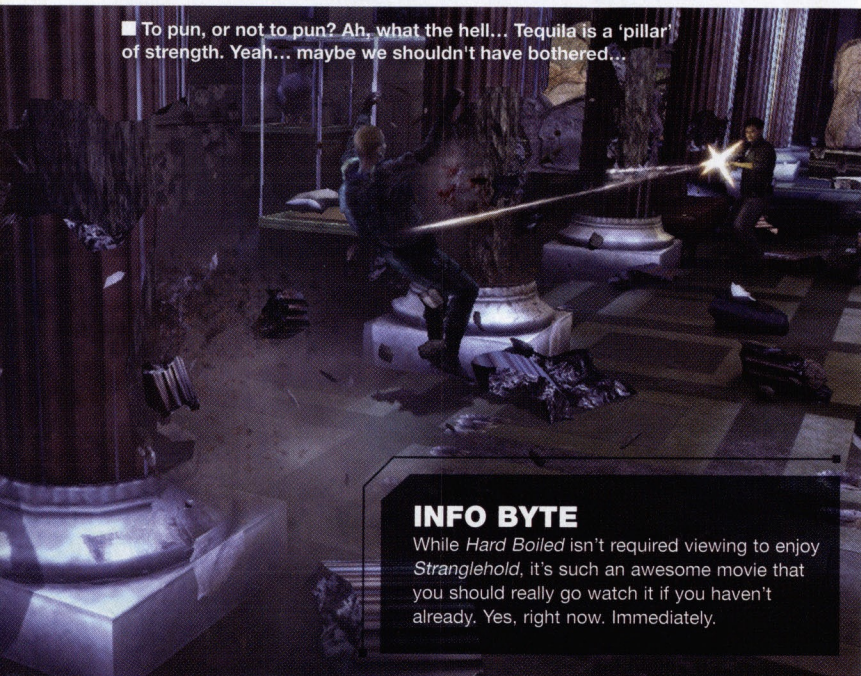
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■ 'Night at the Museum 2: You're History' was a box office flop (but the critics adored it)



■ To pun, or not to pun? Ah, what the hell... Tequila is a 'pillar' of strength. Yeah... maybe we shouldn't have bothered...

INFO BYTE

While *Hard Boiled* isn't required viewing to enjoy *Stranglehold*, it's such an awesome movie that you should really go watch it if you haven't already. Yes, right now. Immediately.



Tequila Bomb to come out on top.

SHOT TO PIECES

One of the most striking features of *Stranglehold* is the intensely destructible environments. With volleys of automatic fire blasting from all directions, wood splinters and masonry gets reduced to rubble. Furniture, sculptures and the like can be laid to ruin, and the entertainment value in reducing an aquarium to an explosion of water, glass and tropical fish with a shotgun blast can not be underestimated. While not everything you can see is destructible, being able to enter a pristine environment and then later leave it showing clear signs of a furious gun battle takes the immersion of game worlds to a new level.

SHOT BY SHOT

So with a focus on truly capturing the cinematic approach, does *Stranglehold* feel like an action movie? Well, if you take a very broad definition, the answer is yes. The plot, involving a mystery long-lost love who gets kidnapped by the Russian Mafia, while fairly far-fetched is fairly serviceable by action movie standards, even if the only overlap with *Hard Boiled* is Tequila himself. The only real complaint with the plotline is that there's pretty much no story progression in the first half of the game, and while a guns-akimbo rampage seems justified when your

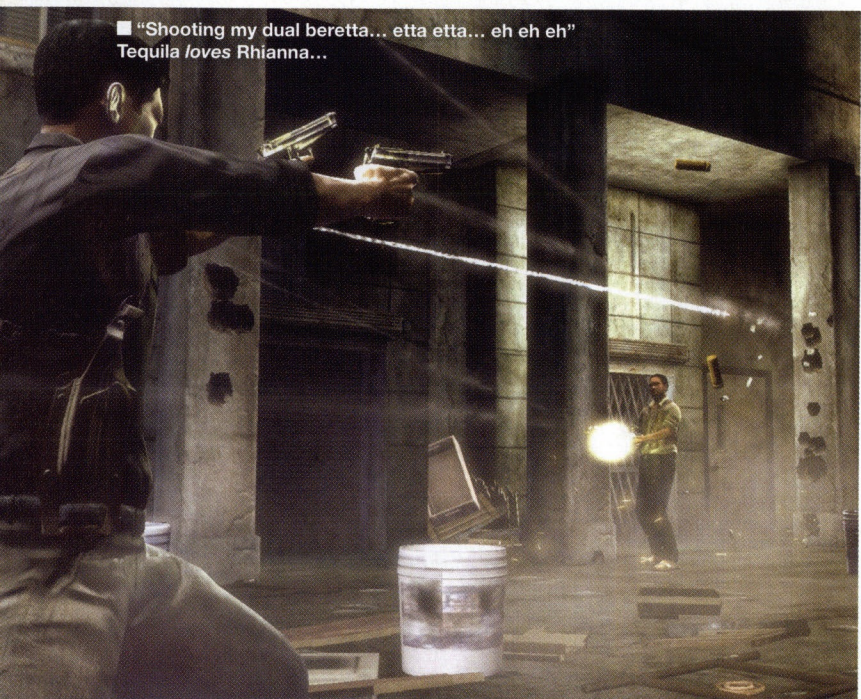
buff, you might even recognise the actor who played the Keymaker in the dubious *Matrix* sequels.

That said, although the aforementioned 'headliners' do put on a solid show, as a whole, the standard is left flagging by some of the poorer performances. When you compare the hand-drawn animation and voice work in *Stranglehold* to the stellar mo-cap and commanding performances in *Heavenly Sword*, the discrepancies between this production and what next gen games are capable of becomes far more pronounced.

A PARTING SHOT

All told, *Stranglehold* doesn't quite live up to its critically acclaimed predecessor. It comes across as a little rough around the edges, but by the same token, there's quite a bit about it to like. While it does seem like Inspector Tequila and gratuitous slow-mo are the only things *Stranglehold* has in common with *Hard Boiled*, the Tequila Bombs and the interactive and destructible environments definitely build on the gameplay experiences of the Woo-influenced *Max Payne* games. If you can appreciate *Stranglehold* despite its flaws, you'll have a ball with it, but with the PS3 release schedule starting to heat up, there's a lot of competition aiming for your hard earned cash. **Nick O'Shea**

"The entertainment value in reducing an aquarium to an explosion of water, glass and tropical fish with a shotgun blast can not be underestimated."



■ "Shooting my dual beretta... etta etta... eh eh eh" Tequila loves Rhianna...

loved one's life is on the line, it seems a bit ridiculous to suggest this is a typical response. Luckily enough, things do get more cohesive as the game progresses.

Continuing along the cinematic angle, *Stranglehold* maintains a fairly low standard. For events that take place primarily in Hong Kong, it would have increased the authenticity had they opted for getting more Cantonese voice talent in on the project. While adding Tony Leung and Phillip Chan may have blown out the budget, going for the dubbed angle does cheapen the experience a bit. To exacerbate the situation, the reality of the claim of 'blockbuster Hollywood talent' being involved is pretty far from the mark. While Chow Yun-Fat definitely makes the grade, about the only others you'll have heard of is B-Grade martial arts mogul Mark Dacascos, and if you're a true movie

SHOOT OUT

To get the early look at *Stranglehold*, we had to get the disc hot off the presses from Midway, and because the multiplayer servers weren't up at the time of printing, we've only been able to check out the single-player aspects of the game. As the multiplayer is a significant feature of any game, we'll be giving it a thorough road-test in the next issue. Considering that implementing time manipulation is a real challenge in multiplayer gameplay, we're dead keen to see how Midway pulls it off.



PROS:

- Solid high-calibre action
- Yun-Fat is THE MAN

CONS:

- B-Grade cinematics
- Becomes repetitive

VERDICT: Won't set the videogame world on fire but packs plenty of frantic fun.

OFFICIAL SCORE:

07



PlayStation®2

COMEDIAN?

shy...?

★
Entertainer?

inside everyone there's a SingStar

'90s is officially the new retro. Turn back the clock and show off your singing prowess with 30 top tracks from the decade. Whether you're a born entertainer, a comedian looking for laughs or even a little shy, you've got what it takes to be a SingStar. Step up to the mic and get the party started. Once you're performing to the classic tunes of years gone by, you'll remember why the '90s were so much fun. Which SingStar are you?

PG

Mild Sexual
References, Mild
Coarse Language,
Mild Themes

singstargame.com

singstar



■ **GENRE:** RACING
■ **RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2007
■ **DEVELOPER:** PARADIGM
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-8
■ **PRICE:** \$109.95
■ **HD:** 720p
■ **WEB:** www.stuntmanignition.com

■ **BACK STORY:** The original *Stuntman*'s brand of tough love was adored by a few but overlooked by most. After Atari shifted the franchise from Reflections to Paradigm we feared the worst, but *Stuntman* has done anything but buckle under the pressure.

STUNTMAN: IGNITION

OPS turns the key and puts pedal to metal



"Bones heal. Chicks dig scars. And the United States of America has the best doctor-to-daredevil ratio in the world!" These famous words uttered by legendary daredevil Captain Lance Murdoch to Bart Simpson aptly summarise the appeal of being a stuntman in the eyes of daydreaming youngsters.

It's all about balls. And few people can boast a bigger pair than stuntmen. Every day these guys laugh in the face of fear, tweak the nipples of danger and give death an atomic wedgie. It's no surprise that the recklessly macho domain of stuntmen is so appealing for young boys desperate to shed their childhood. Most of us have grown up a little since then, though. We may have accepted we won't be stuntmen, or astronauts, or porn stars or get blasted by radiation and gain super powers (that realisation always stings the most) but that never stops us jumping at the chance to indulge our boyhood dreams in the videogame realm.

TRIAL BY FIRE

As you can presumably take a fair punt at from the title, *Stuntman* casts you as an up-and-coming daredevil driver trying to make a name for himself in Hollywood. Over the course of your career you'll perform in six blockbuster movies, hurtling through various dangerous stunt courses in each, while standing in for the lead heroes and villains.

Rather than wasting the game's entire budget on licensing real movies, and restricting themselves to using only the stunts seen in the original flicks, *Stuntman: Ignition* wisely opts to have its movies be a loosely based concoction of various familiar classics. The two 1997 lava-fests *Dante's Peak* and *Volcano* have been fused together as the generic

disaster flick *Aftershock*. The San Francisco-based *Overdrive* is essentially a three car pile-up involving the best bits from *The Rock*, *Metro* and *Bullitt*. *Mad Max*, *The Dukes of Hazzard* and the *Bond* flicks also get a look in.

RAMPING IT UP

Unlike real-life movie stunts, which are done one painstaking scene at a time, *Stuntman* weaves together around 20 different stunts into one long take. Generally each run will have a single signature stunt, but along the way you'll be told by the director, and handy on-screen prompts, which mini stunts you need to perform along the way.

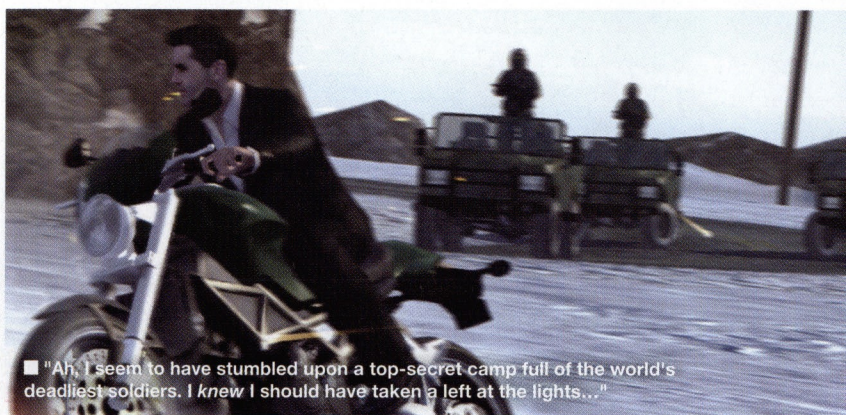
Calling them 'mini stunts' fails to do them justice, though. With only the briefest of warnings, and at dangerously high speeds, you'll be expected to slide motorcycles under semi trailers, dodge incoming missiles by driving on two wheels, perform handbrake 180 degree turns, launch yourself over huge obstacles and thread your vehicle through the narrowest of gaps. Doing all of these stunts, and more, in the space of a few minutes is commonplace in *Stuntman*.

As impressive as the above feats sound, you'll really need to kick it up a gear for the signature stunts. Bringing down a chopper by launching your dune buggy through the air into it, dodging between apartment-sized boulders of ice while fighting to stay in control of your car as you trigger successive nitro boosts to escape a collapsing ice canyon and performing a reverse 180 in a crumbling multi-storey carpark before smashing through the second storey wall and hurtling over a lava river to land safely on the street below are a few of the signature highlights. The precise nature of the game's stunts does mean

there are a lot more mid-run restarts than most driving games but it's a testament to Paradigm's skill that the excitement consistently outweighs the frustration to a great extent.

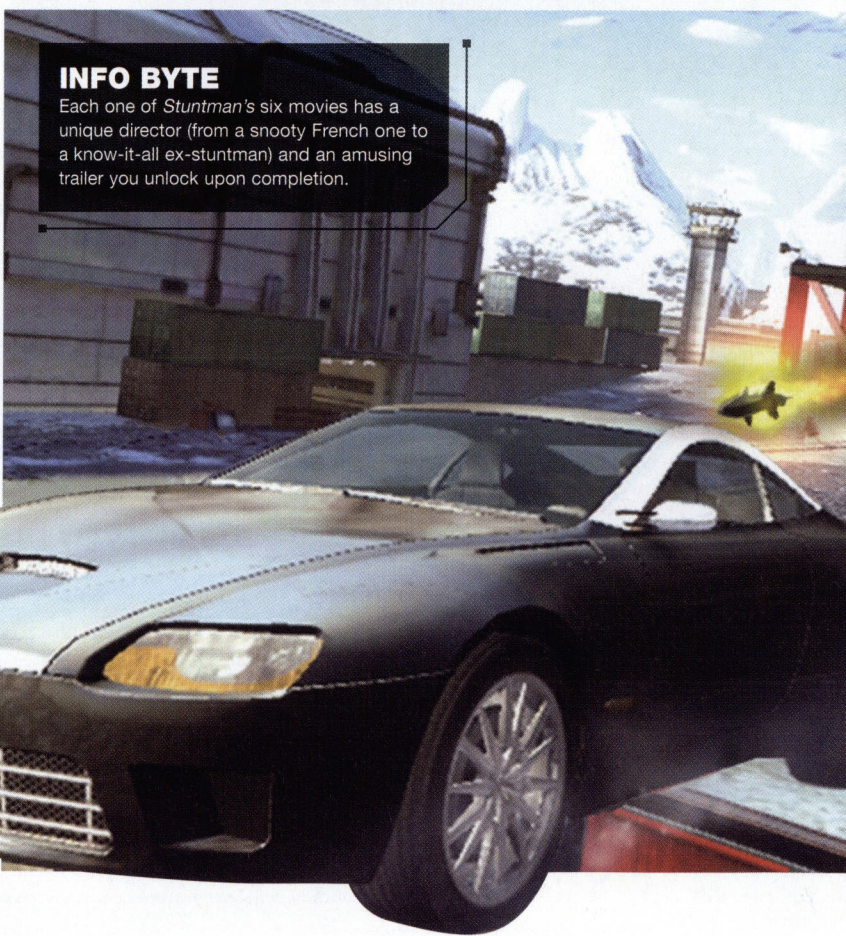
Stuntman's visuals are eyeball-searingly hot and the stunts you're performing really make sense within the setting. Rather than doing arbitrary stunts you'll be prompted to do a handbrake 180 because the road you were barrelling down just crumbled into a river of lava. You're firing your BMW-mounted missile

launcher at the building because you need to collapse one end of the roof and use it as a makeshift ramp to jump out of the compound and escape. And while you're performing these rapid-fire daredevil feats there are hundreds of other explosions, crashing cars, henchmen firing machine guns, earthquakes, lava eruptions and the like going on in the background. *Stuntman* is so exciting to watch it's one of those rare games that regularly attracts crowds of cheering onlookers from the office's other magazine teams.



INFO BYTE

Each one of *Stuntman*'s six movies has a unique director (from a snooty French one to a know-it-all ex-stuntman) and an amusing trailer you unlock upon completion.





■ When parallel parking goes wrong



■ "Um, hello, mechanic? Yes, well my car seems to be somehow defying gravity... yes I'll hold..."



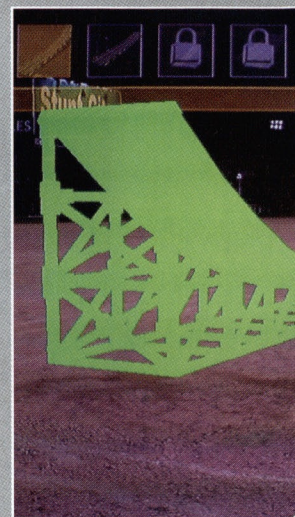
As well as the eye candy and intensity, Paradigm has polished this sequel to perfection so that the frustration level never approaches the 'makes you want to tear your pubic hair out by the roots' agony of the original *Stuntman*. A generous difficulty curve allows you to botch five stunts before the director calls for a re-shoot (seven if you toggle it to easy). Of the twenty or so stunts in a mission there are often a couple of 'make or break' stunts that demand an instant re-shoot, but even when you're forced to restart a run it's never a drama thanks to the lightning-fast loading times that see you speeding off again in 2-3 seconds.

WHEN YOU GET THAT FEELING...

Don't make the mistake of assuming *Stuntman*'s leniency makes the game a cakewalk. While you can progress through the game bungling a few of the stunts on each run, achieving five star ratings by stringing lengthy *Tony Hawk*-style combos together will test the most skilled of rev heads. Performing any stunt within two seconds of the next will start a combo,

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

We're pleased to report the Stuntpark mode returns in Paradigm's cracking sequel. By placing ramps, obstacles and vehicles from an ultimately staggering list (unlocked as you progress through the career) it's possible to create your own stunt runs from scratch. The Stuntpark has been fleshed out impressively, allowing you to create stunt runs that are unique and challenging. At the time of writing it was still not confirmed whether you'll be able to share your created stunt runs online, but we'll test this, and the wealth of other multiplayer modes, in our upcoming online review of *Stuntman: Ignition*.



but because the scripted stunts are often a good ten seconds apart you'll need to freestyle it to keep the combo alive. During the brief lulls you should aim to get air, drift around a corner, drive within a metre of an obstacle or pop a wheelie.

Using your own stunts to weave the scripted ones into a single combo is where *Stuntman*'s lasting appeal lies. If you thought it was tough dodging through cross traffic while lining up your motorcycle to leap the river, try it while popping a wheelie, right after pushing your last drift a good second longer than any sane person would have.

Remember the feeling you had that one time everything came together in *GTA* for a dream run where you side-swiped one cop car into an oncoming truck, drifted around the corner, then ended up on two wheels as you scraped through a roadblock? Well, this game recreates that same dream run feeling but manages to sustain it constantly for the entire game. *Stuntman: Ignition* succeeds in upending the original in everyway possible; no need for a re-shoot here. **Narayan Pattison**

PROS:

- Incredible stunts
- An instant crowd pleaser

CONS:

- Relatively short
- Some patience is mandatory

VERDICT: The vehicular equivalent of 10 hour-long orgasm. Gentlemen, start your boners.

OFFICIAL SCORE:
09

■ **GENRE:** RACING
■ **RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2007
■ **DEVELOPER:** CODEMASTERS
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ATARI

■ **PLAYERS:** 1
■ **PRICE:** \$109.95
■ **HD:** 720p
■ **WEB:** www.codemasters.com

■ **BACK STORY:** It could be argued that Colin McRae is more famous for his videogame series than his actual driving. With *DIRT*, Codemasters is attempting to once again place the crown atop the gruff Scotsman's dome.

INFO BYTE

Colin McRae was born in Lanark, Scotland – in the very same hospital as our beloved staff writer Mark.



■ Stupid racing screenshots. Seriously, we're totally out of ideas. This... um, looks cool and it has buggies in it

COLIN McRAE: DIRT

“Tryin’ to catch me ridin’ dirty...”

PlayStation.
**SILVER
AWARD**
9/10

When Polyphony Digital released the latest trailer of *Gran Turismo 5* at E3, something weird happened. It was almost as if you could hear the hearts of every racing developer in the world sink all the way out of their arse onto the cold hard floor, wriggling around in the throes of death, spluttering for dear life.

Well, every racing developer that is, except Codemasters.

Why? Well it probably had something to do with the release of a little game called *Colin McRae: DIRT*. By now you've probably heard a lot about this puppy, drooled over the screenshots and lusted after those damage models, but the good news is that *DIRT* has finally hit our shores. The even better news, however, is that it's a top notch racer that combines the arcade sensibilities and downright 'dirtyness' of *Motorstorm* with the realism and customisability we have come to expect from next gen racers.

The first thing that impresses about *DIRT* is undoubtedly the slick

presentation. An aspect of gaming often overlooked by developers, Codemasters has obviously spent a lot of time and resources in this department creating a menu system that is both functional and accessible. Zipping through the futuristic menu is a joy to behold, and renders the wide array of customisable options comprehensible, as opposed to overwhelming – an amazing achievement considering the prodigious scope players have to tweak and perfect the individual parts of each vehicle.

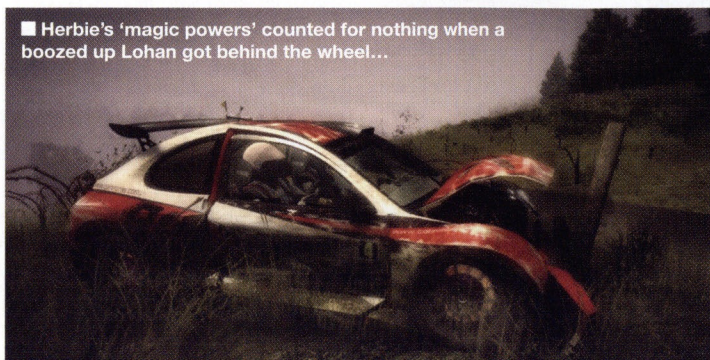
And this is one of the areas where

Colin McRae: DIRT shines. All aspects of the car are adjustable, from the different areas of suspension to wheel angles, tyres, brakes, and even the gear ratios (allowing you to change the point at which the automatic system moves up a gear), all areas of your vehicle can be specifically changed to suit the track.

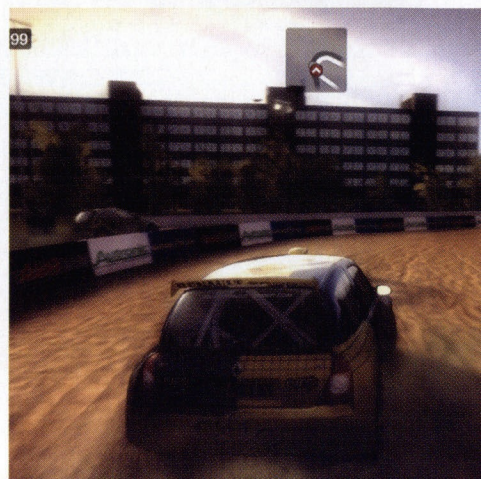
SUSPENSION? BRAKES? I DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL THAT CRAP...

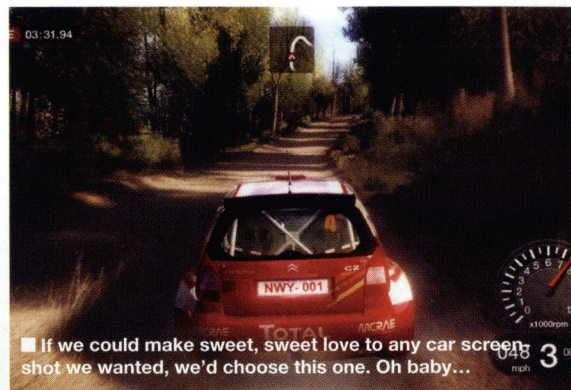
While this usually elicits autistic-like blank stares from the majority of the OPS staff (except Luke who has, in fact, actually

■ Herbie's 'magic powers' counted for nothing when a boozed up Lohan got behind the wheel...



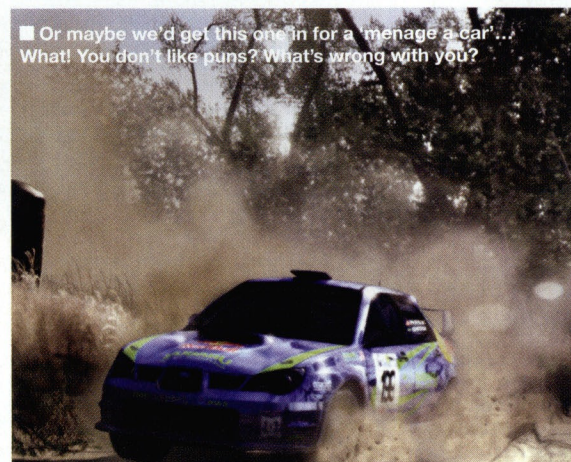
■ Eating dust: really grainy, and sort of bad for your health...





■ If we could make sweet, sweet love to any car screen-shot we wanted, we'd choose this one. Oh baby...

"DIRT brings that arcade accessibility to the table without sacrificing any of the longevity that a hardcore simulation provides"



■ Or maybe we'd get this one in for a 'menage a car'... What! You don't like puns? What's wrong with you?

built a time machine) *DIRT* makes the whole thing understandable for the non-engineers amongst us with some really helpful voice overs which are audible in almost every sub menu in the game. These voice overs, by rally man-of-the-moment Travis Pastrana, help you with all those fennickety details like when and where to tighten your suspension, lower the spoilers, change tyres, etc.

This attention to detail speaks volumes regarding Codemasters' direction and ultimate goal with *DIRT*. By simplifying (and in some cases merely explaining) the different components of the rally sim that adds depth to the genre, *DIRT* brings that arcade accessibility to the table without sacrificing any of the longevity that a hardcore simulation provides – essentially reeling in the noobs, while keeping the rally experts on the hook. But that's not to say the game compromises in any department. On the contrary, the racing experience is well tuned and balanced in the way that all good games are: easy to pick up, yet difficult to master.

No sacrifices have been made here, and this is perhaps most evident in the damage models featured in *DIRT*. Accurate to the point of obsession, you can check all aspects of damage by simply pausing in game – each part of the car will have a damage percentage enabling you to instantly see how much

of a hammering you're actually giving the car. To be honest, though, you won't ever have to check, since the razor sharp controls enable you to simply feel how damage affects the car's performance.

STUPID IRONY...

Phew! And we haven't even gotten to those graphics, which, ironically, despite looking slicker than Jessica Alba lubed in baby oil, contain some of *DIRT*'s few flaws. After looking at the gorgeous screenshots dotted around these pages, you may feel inclined to kneel us in the gonads for our stupidity, but hear us out for a second...

In some ways, graphically, *DIRT* can often get a little too big for its boots, as the beautifully rendered vehicles tend to push the framerate firmly into the 'choppy' department. In addition, the draw distance often suffers with added textures popping into view that second too late. Don't get us wrong, the game obviously looks drop dead gorgeous, but in motion, at high speed, where it counts,

DIRT can often disappoint.

DIRT's huge ambition and sheer refusal to sacrifice any visual quality actually causes the game to drive a little less smoothly than we would have ideally liked. It also seems to have come at the expense of split-screen multiplayer, which is unforgivably absent. We chastised *MotorStorm* for lack of split-screen, and *DIRT* is no different. There really isn't any excuse for a racing game in 2007 to ship without two-player split-screen, otherwise we're just going backwards. We would have been glad to sacrifice that extra bit of graphical polish for a consistent frame rate and two-player mode, but we're just crazy like that.

But we would also be crazy to write off what is quite possibly the greatest rally game on the market for a couple of niggly issues. Anyone could conceivably play *DIRT* and have a great time doing so, but very few will master it.

It may not be perfect, but you are looking at the best rally game on the PS3 bar none. **Mark Serrels**

PROS:

- Best looking rally game out
- Balances arcade/sim well

CONS:

- Slight frame-rate issues
- Empty backdrops

VERDICT: An ambitious, accessible racer with surprising depth. A must buy.

OFFICIAL SCORE:
09

THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND...

With a total of 25 World Rally Championship wins, including 42 podium places, Colin McRae is a bit of legend in rally circles. Doing a 'Tony Hawk', McRae has pretty much retired from competitive racing, and just potters about doing different races here and there in different disciplines. He also has the best middle name ever – with a name like Colin 'Steele' McRae, surely the man was destined for success. McRae also participated in the 2006 X games, coming second only to Travis Pastrana, who actually features heavily in *DIRT*, providing advice in the games many, helpful voice overs.



PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** FLIGHT
■ **RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2007
■ **DEVELOPER:** FACTOR 5
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY

■ **PLAYERS:** 1
■ **PRICE:** \$99.95
■ **HD:** 1080p
■ **WEB:** www.us.playstation.com/Lair

■ **BACK STORY:** *Lair* has been (over)hyped as the next-gen PS3 killer title to have. Every man and his or her dog has been waiting for this dragon combat game. You know that feeling of loss and betrayal you felt when you realised there was no Santa Claus? Get ready for it all over again...



■ SIXAXIS controls and dragons. Freakin' dragons. How did they go so wrong?

LAIR

Want a perfect definition of 'wasted potential'?
Look no further

When the PS3 finally made it to our shores we were jubilant – and rightly so. A whole new generation of games coming our way – what's not to love? And while the quantity at launch time was a tad underwhelming – the quality one-two punch of *MotorStorm* and *Resistance: Fall of Man* more than satisfied our need for proof of the PS3's potential, and they were launch titles!

Y'see launch titles, traditionally, are buggy as hell. Now if *Lair* had been a launch title we might have been a little easier on it. And believe us – we don't want to stick the boot into *Lair* – the trailers had us gibbering with glee. We saw the awesome next gen potential of dragon riders in a warfare situation and then... we played the game. Oh dear. Before that, though, let's take a look at the plot.

ONCE UPON A TIME...

Lair puts you in the sooty boots of a "burner". One of the elite, top gun dragon riders. You're the best of the best of the

best... and so on. It's a good thing you're around too, because your enemies to the north are getting a tad arsey and sending their dragons to attack. Peace talks dissolve due to a twist that actually sets up a pretty cool premise – as you find you may be fighting on the wrong side...

DOESN'T SOUND SO BAD

No, the story isn't *Lair*'s problem. Nor is the game's main gimmick – SIXAXIS control. Yes, this is the first game where you have to use the cordless black controller as a means of making your dragon do what it's told. In the rather perfunctory training mission you'll find yourself swooping and flapping your leathery wings – moving with a fluid-like grace.

We've now officially told you everything good about *Lair*. The flying is kind of cool and the world you inhabit is vaguely interesting. Now let's chat about the rest.

DRAGGIN' THE DRAGON

There's a French expression "belle laide"



■ "Er... Dracco, sorry to bring this up but can you keep an eye out for a servo? I need to tinkle"



■ "I don't want you to turn around but we may have a problem"

that, roughly translated, means "beautiful/ugly". That's *Lair*, right there. A level will start with a beautifully rendered cut-scene, that leads into the action and things go pear-shaped. It's like walking from a lush rainforest into a strip club on "rough head and rough body" night. The character models are just not very good looking – hardly worthy of the 1080p the game runs at. Admittedly, from a distance, the cities and mountains look great – but up close the textures will often dance and flicker from pretty to, well, shitty. But perhaps the worst affront to our eyes are the flame and explosion effects.

In a game where you fly dragons you'd think they'd at least get the fire looking good. Not so. In fact, the fire effects, and the explosions in particular, are genuinely ugly. There are a variety of dragons, huge Manta bombers being one species. When they explode you'd swear you were watching a shonky PS2 game. The buildings blowing up looks a bit better with some nice fragmentation effects, but it's inconsistent. It's as if they polished some levels and went down the pub instead of finishing the rest.

B-B-B-BUT I LOVE DRAGONS!

Okay, so it has some severe graphical problems, we mentioned how much fun it was to fly. Therefore the game must be at least fun... right? Erm, no, actually. While it is fun to fly your dragon – using it for combat is a haphazard, sloppy affair. Being a living being you don't have a lock-on reticle, rather you just sort of mash **LB** or **RB** hoping to surround your target in a white aura. If you manage this – and in the heat of battle it's bloody hard, the lock-on often picking seemingly random targets – you can press the button again making the white turn red. This means your fire will keep hitting said target until it's destroyed. Sounds easy, but it's not.

This wouldn't be so bad if the missions weren't so rigidly structured. Commands will be barked at you – often contradicting each other – and you have to work out the right order to follow or it's start again.

Do you swoop down, pluck the rhino from the ground and throw it into the sea? Or do you protect your ground troops from enemy dragons? Or do you go after the catapults? Basically you'll find out using trial and error, because there's no wiggle room in *Lair*. The combat is the same every time, it's usually just a matter of working out what to attack first.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE COOL DRAGON-JACKING SCENES FROM THE TRAILER?

Ah yes, glad you asked. They're crap. Sorry, but it's true. Occasionally you'll have the option to "takedown" an enemy. Cue a cut-scene where you shake the controller, twiddle the left knob and watch one of about five different kills. The problem is you'll be so busy shaking your controller and pulling your knob (tee-hee!) you won't be able to get a good look at them. And even if you do... they're just not that great.

Other modes include fight mode where you can battle other dragons by scratching biting and clawing – also quite uninspiring. Landing amongst enemy troops can be kind of cool because as you bite, lunge and breathe fire all over them the game slows down showing the grunts flying all over the shop. But after you've done that once, maybe twice you sort of wonder – is that it?

IS IT AT LEAST LONG?

No. It's occasionally frustratingly hard, but that's because of the strict, linear ways you have to tackle the missions – and the fact the missions are usually long and only some of them have checkpoints.

Once you get the hang of it you could

finish *Lair* in a weekend. Less if you're a hardcore gamer. And to add insult to that considerable injury: no multiplayer. This was a game made for multiplayer. You could have dragon dogfights with people all over the world, create your own beast... but no, that's something else *Lair* doesn't have. All you get for finishing the game is a doco that has the developers telling you how awesome the game is, and some artwork detailing some really cool looking creatures... that didn't make it into the final game's paltry and repetitive 15 levels (and that includes the tutorial level).

DUDE, SAVAGE BURN!

Look – this is a harsh review, but *Lair* deserves it. Factor 5 has no excuse for this slipshod, inconsistent and occasionally downright ugly title. It had Sony backing it for God's sake! The six month launch title window has closed. The honeymoon is over and the kid gloves have come off. There are going to be some amazing games coming out over the next six months and to be quite frank we just can't recommend this as one of them. Deeply disappointing. **— Anthony O'Connor**

PROS:

- Intuitive SIXAXIS flight
- Cool world and plot

CONS:

- Ugly, glitchy graphics
- No multiplayer

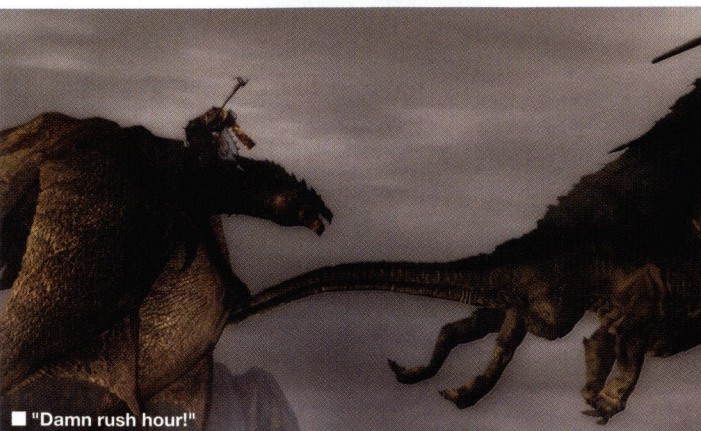
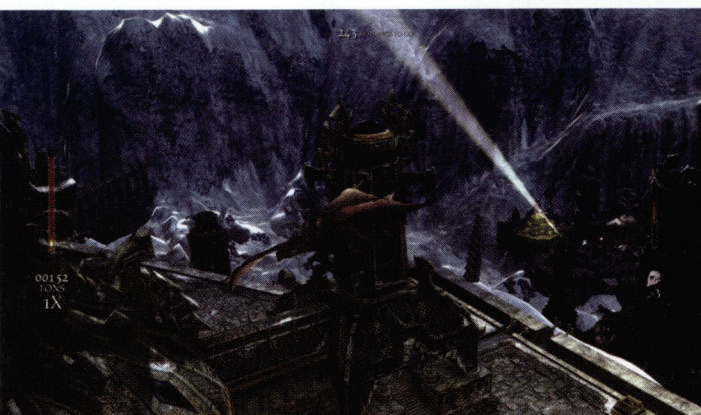
VERDICT: *Lair* is such a letdown. It feels rushed and unfinished.

THE MONSTER MASH

Not everything in *Lair* sucks. Burning legions of enemy troops is initially a hoot and shaking the controller to tear apart a catapult or similar is mildly diverting, plus you get a bullet-time esque "rage" mode. But perhaps the coolest things are the random monster attacks in this world. Here's one you'll have to fight. There's another one... and that's about it. Yet more wasted potential. Excuse us, we need to lie down. This game made the entire office tired and sad.



OFFICIAL
SCORE:
05



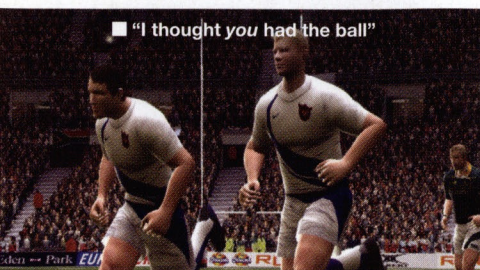
■ "Damn rush hour!"

■ Two full moons in the one picture – weird

■ **GENRE:** SPORTS
■ **RELEASE:** NOW
■ **DEVELOPER:** EA CANADA
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2
■ **PRICE:** \$69.95
■ **HD:** 576i
■ **WEB:** www.easports.com

■ **BACK STORY:** EA's last dabble with the Rugby World Cup was EA Sports' *Rugby World Cup 1995* on SEGA Genesis. The current PS2 series began in 2001 as *Rugby*, followed up by *Rugby 2004*, *Rugby 2005* and *Rugby 06*. There was no 2007 version.



INFO BYTE

There have been five Rugby World Cups. New Zealand won it in 1987, and Australia won it in 1991 and 1999.



RUGBY 08

Balls up

Another World Cup, another game tie-in. We won't spend too much time listing *Rugby 08*'s features. Official teams? Check. Create-a-Player? Check. It has everything the last one had.

Including all the same problems.

The graphics are really beginning to show their age. After being treated to a number of exceptional looking PS3 sports titles, *Rugby 08* truly is several different kinds of ugly. The game may not look that poor in the face of similar PS2 footy games, but it certainly ain't pretty.

Rugby 08 also suffers from exactly the same fundamental problems as *Rugby 06* did two years ago. The \otimes button is used to bind, but it's also used to dive tackle. This means if you're adding players to the ruck by hammering \otimes and there's a turnover, you'll end up sending the last

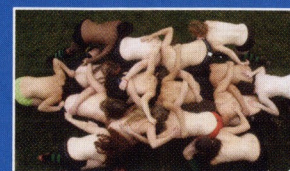
player you were in control of diving offside and conceding a penalty. The hobbled defensive controls remain, meaning tackling opponents is ludicrously tough, the set plays aren't really as effective as you'd think, the opposition AI can be easy to exploit and replays of key moments and high-shots are often wrong. Other frustrations from *Rugby 06* that plague *Rugby 08* include the inability to make late passes (it seems the CPU has already cued up the tackle a few steps before it occurs), the ability to pass the ball 30 metres back down the field if the player you were expecting to be there isn't, the tendency for the defensive line to break up and split open the second the ball moves to the back line, and the inability for some players to hit the ball on the run. The added classic matches and

challenges from Rugby World Cups of yore provide a bullet point for the back of the box, but there doesn't appear to be any old rosters – so games from more than a decade ago are played with current line-ups. Success will yield you a bunch of World Cup highlight reels.

It'll take a discerning eye to spot many differences between *Rugby 08* and *Rugby 06*. It's good timing for this year's World Cup and rugby fans may be sorely tempted, but it's not really a new game. The *Rugby* series really ought to be simply a speedier version of the far smoother and superior *Madden*. Surely taking the latest *Madden* and massaging a few ones and zeroes would result in the best digital version of rugby ever created? Also, a PS3 version wouldn't go astray. Ahem. **— Luke Reilly**

GIRL ON GIRL

Naked rugby. Sounds awkward. For instance, we're sure Phil Waugh is a top bloke – but the kind of tackle we want to see from him isn't in his shorts. Fortunately, we're talking about Ohio's Oberlin College women's rugby. They've released two nude calendars so far. The aim is admirable and spelt out on the front cover – in a society that brands female athletes as masculine, the calendars parody the standard beauty myth. We're not convinced the target audience is reading anything on the front with 12 months of T&A inside, but props for a good effort.



PROS:

- Robust, fun multiplayer
- Err... updated teams?

CONS:

- Not a patch on *Madden*
- Almost identical to *Rugby 06*

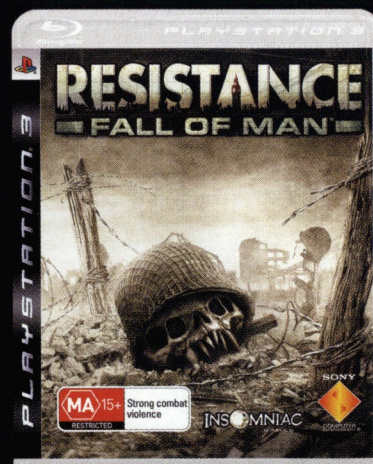
VERDICT: Barely a whisker of improvement in two years – not worth it if you own *Rugby 06*.

OFFICIAL
SCORE:
06

*Offer limited to participating outlets in Australia and New Zealand. Games are those depicted on this packaging, but may vary if stock limited. Offer commences 2 August 2007 and will end 30 September 2007 (or earlier, while stock lasts). This offer is available in respect of any new PLAYSTATION®3 60GB computer entertainment system purchased during the offer period. Offer only available at time of purchase. Offer not valid in conjunction with any other promotion. **The offer includes a MA15+ rated game (R16 rated in New Zealand) – game restricted to persons 15 years and over in Australia/16 years and over in New Zealand. No alternative game is provided for those under the age restriction.



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This is living

PLAYSTATION®3

PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** PARTY
■ **RELEASE:** NOW
■ **DEVELOPER:** SONY
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** SONY

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-8
■ **PRICE:** \$49.95
■ **HD:** 576i
■ **WEB:** www.singstargame.com



SINGSTAR '90S

"I summon fish to the dish, although I like the chalet swiss..."

SingStar '90s is actually a resounding return to form after the recently released *Pop Hits* (which was full of absolute garbage).

30 tracks. No new modes. Same old. The line-up isn't half bad to be honest, and standouts include Radiohead's 'Creep', The Cranberries' 'Zombie', The Cure's 'Friday I'm In Love', Barenaked Ladies' 'One Week' and Sir Mix-a-Lot's 'Baby Got Back'. But it doesn't all come up kittens (we criticise because we care).

A press release for *SingStar '90s* claimed Australia was leading the charge with this title, having locally developed the track list. We wonder, then, why only four local tracks made the cut. We also

wonder why none of them are any good. An entire decade of Australian music and all they can come up with is 'I Touch Myself', 'Where the Wild Roses Grow' and 'I Want You' (Savage Garden, how we despise thee)? The best Australian song on *SingStar '90s* is Natalie Imbruglia's 'Torn'. And that's just sad.

Also, the rap scoring farce really

has gone on long enough. Just try to say, "Baby got back" into the mic the EXACT way it wants you to say it. It won't happen. Something needs to be done about the scoring mechanic. It doesn't work. At all. Additionally, it's hardly a fair '90s collection without any grunge, is it? Because there isn't any. Still, worth the \$50? Yes. **♫ Luke Reilly**

PROS:

■ It's like *Rock Band*, just without guitars or drums. Sigh

CONS:

■ Rap scoring still sucks
■ No good Aussie music

VERDICT: Not a bad chapter in the series, but it needed more decent Australian '90s tunes.



Love - - is al - a - round me
And so the feel - ing grows - -

09:10
77250



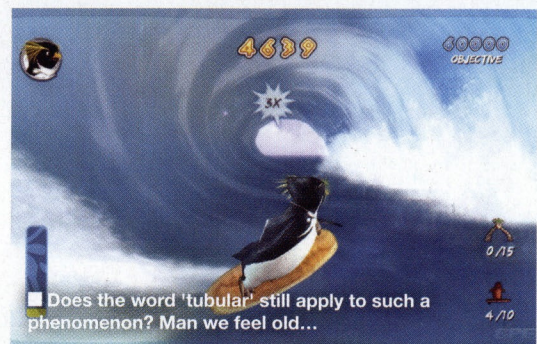
Stop, Ham - mer time
Go with the funk

OFFICIAL
SCORE:
08

PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** SPORTS
■ **RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2007
■ **DEVELOPER:** UBISOFT
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2
■ **PRICE:** \$49.95
■ **HD:** 576i
■ **WEB:** www.surfsupgame.uk.ubi.com



SURF'S UP

...but this game is down and out

Your wallet will hate this game more than anyone. He doesn't like opening his trap at the best of times to fork out for games when there are bills to be paid, but when it's a title like *Surf's Up* that'll stay as fresh as sushi in the rear of a hearse, he's got extra grounds to bite your fingers off.

Will kids actually want this thing anyway? Without doubt. A fleeting pass through any game-equipped department store with your whippersnapper will have them producing rivers of froth - particularly if they've seen the flick. Then it'll come down to the happiness of your wallet, or the happiness of your child.

Buy this game and your kid will be

entertained for a while. A languid frolic with training wheels, it allows players to control the game's main faces as they ride waves, pull off various Hawk-like moves and charge up a yabba-dabba-do bar that they can expend on extra speed or to enter into a tubular trick mode. So you should buy it, right?

No. Like much like Whitney Houston,

OPS believes that children are our future. Throwing them in front of this banal schlock is akin to tying their brains up in front of an industrial microwave. Kids games should be stimulating in their own way, not dumbed down guff like this.

We're tipping *Surf's Up* will have an average life expectancy of about a week, perhaps less. **♫ James Ellis**

PROS:

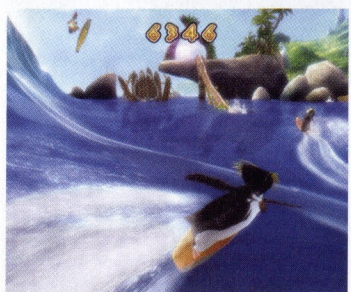
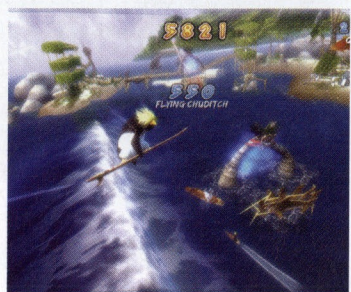
■ You advocate child abuse
■ You suck at adult games

CONS:

■ There are heaps of superior kids games out there

VERDICT: A solid but uncreative slab of merchandise filler. Wait for the next wave.

OFFICIAL
SCORE:
05



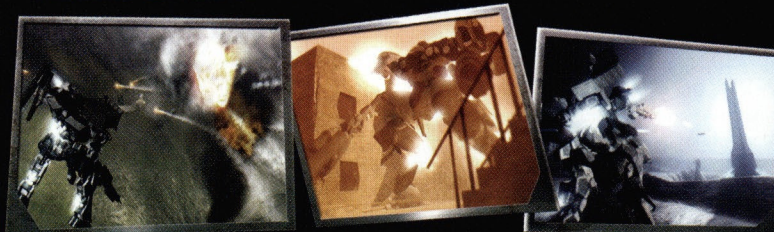
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PLAYSTATION 3

FROM SOFTWARE



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PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** SKATEBOARDING
■ **RELEASE:** NOW
■ **DEVELOPER:** SUPERVILLAIN
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ACTIVISION

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2
■ **PRICE:** \$49.95
■ **HD:** 576i
■ **WEB:** www.supervillainstudios.com

TONY HAWK'S DOWNHILL JAM

So, uh, there's this hill, see... oh never mind

Contrary to the title, *Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam* is not about Tony's homemade preserves rolling down an incline. Being the hip, up-to-date cats we are at *OPS* we know that "Jam" is cool skater lingo for a gathering, shindig or hootenanny. [Are you drinking at work again, Anthony? - Ed]

Frankly Tony Hawk's recent entries have been, well, lackluster. For many people the series peaked with *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3* or perhaps the first *THUG*. Beyond that things seemed to have gotten a tad stale.

We'd love to tell you this is where it all turns around... but that would be a fib. *Downhill Jam*, is just that, going downhill. Fast. Occasionally jumping over stuff or grinding rails but mainly just going downhill. A lot.

Why, you ask, would the new Tony Hawk title go so low tech. See the thing is - this isn't really the new Tony Hawk game. It's a port of a Wii title. As such, it's

a little light on what you'd call substance.

An interesting experiment would have been to port this to the PS3 and use the SIXAXIS to perform all your wacky skater tricks and whatnot.

However that is not the case here.

Ultimately *Downhill Jam* isn't bad per se, but it's relentlessly average. Almost aggressively so. Poor graphics, samey tracks and, well, you're just going down a bloody hill! What next? Tony Hawk Pops Off to The Servo to Buy Some Durries Jam? Bored...

We'll wait for the next proper entry, thanks Tone, if it's all the same to you old chap. **Anthony O'Connor**

PROS:

- It's kind of fun to play
- It doesn't give you herpes

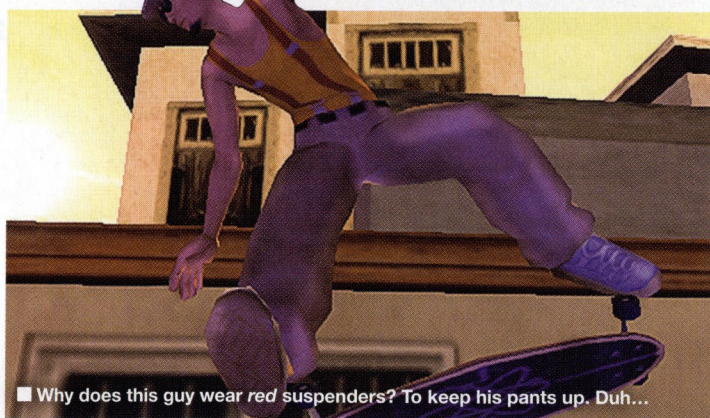
CONS:

- Shallow and shonky
- It's a pretty lame Wii port

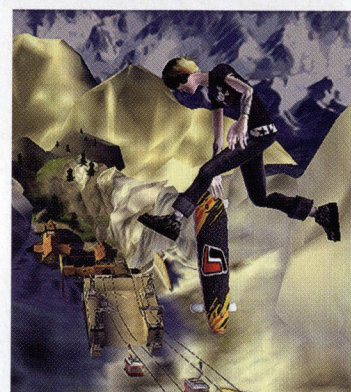
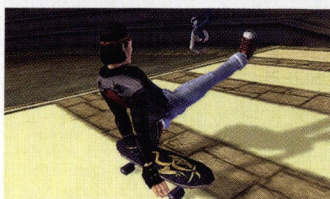
VERDICT: There's just no real reason to own it. It feels truncated and shallow.

OFFICIAL
SCORE:

05



■ Why does this guy wear red suspenders? To keep his pants up. Duh...



PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** RPG
■ **RELEASE:** NOW
■ **DEVELOPER:** KOEI
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ

■ **PLAYERS:** 1
■ **PRICE:** \$49.95
■ **HD:** 576i
■ **WEB:** www.nisamerica.com

ATELIER IRIS 3: GRAND PHANTASM

Oh look, a weird little Japanese RPG... how "fun"

Look, in the same way mech games are a niche market, so too is the "weird Japanese RPG". If you're into this kind of thing you've probably already purchased your copy and are happily chopping up cute monsters with your cute weapons and your cute characters are levelling up nicely.

To be honest the whole "cute" thing gets slightly eerie after a while. Like a play put on by midgets. The novelty gets old really fast.

The "plot" is about a book, or something, that's been split into eight parts and needs to be assembled.

When said book is put together it can grant you any wish you desire. Unfortunately you can't wish this game would be, you know, good.

In a world where we have games like *Final Fantasy XII* and *Rogue Galaxy* you have to wonder just who the hell plays these games? And more so than that - why? Why choose a slightly whiffy

sandwich you found under the bed over a sizzling burger, chips and beer?

Certainly there has been some advancement in the combat system in the *Atelier* series, it's faster and timed dungeon crawls give some sense of immediacy and action, but ultimately this is the kind of game that requires hours of your life before things get even mildly interesting. To put it bluntly: there are dozens of better RPGs out there.

Overall this *Grand Phantasm* should be left well alone. Rent the movie *Phantasm* instead. It's got this silver ball that drills into people's brains and stuff. It's tops! **Anthony O'Connor**

PROS:

- Improved, faster combat
- It's cute. And you like cute

CONS:

- Boredom sets in quickly...
- ...and it's no *Rogue Galaxy*

VERDICT: Maybe a decade ago we may have given it props. But it's 2007, so we're not going to.



■ Please be 18.



OFFICIAL
SCORE:

04

This is living

PLAYSTATION 3



WWW.LAIRPS3GAME.COM

FACTOR 5

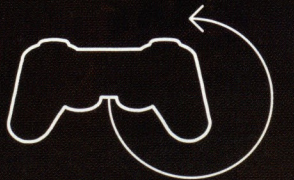
Moderate Science Fiction Violence



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YOU TURN, THE DRAGON TURNS.

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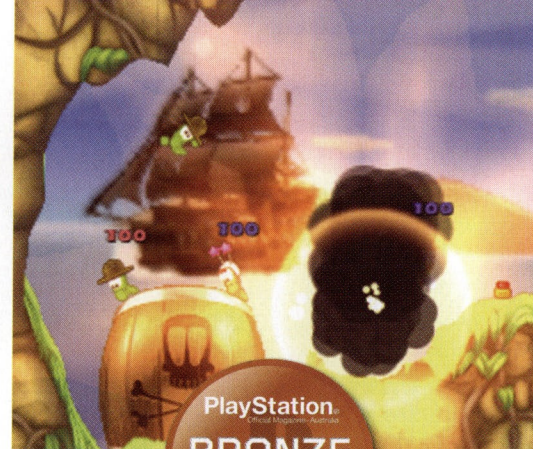


PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** STRATEGY
■ **RELEASE:** NOW
■ **DEVELOPER:** TEAM 17
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-4
■ **PRICE:** \$59.95
■ **GAMESHARE:** YES
■ **WEB:** www.wormsopenwarfare2.com

■ "I'm a rocket man! I mean worm"



PlayStation
Official Magazine Australia
BRONZE AWARD
8/10

WORMS: OPEN WARFARE 2

We open up a can...

Bless those crazy buggers at Team 17 for the idea of multiple teams of worms arming themselves to the teeth (yes, worms have teeth – look it up) and wiping each other off the face of the map. Rather than follow in the worm tracks of the PS2's poor 3D *Worms* titles, this game returns the series to the classic 2D style that made it such a hit in the '90s.

The 2D view is perfect for *Open Warfare 2* because at its heart it's an RTS, where precision and planning outweigh heroics and itchy trigger fingers. Think of it as *Command & Conquer*, except instead of tanks and planes you've got worms in jetpacks dropping Monty Python-style Holy Hand Grenades.

There is a healthy single-player mode too but the game's real meat lies in its multiplayer. With Wi-Fi, online, Gameshare AND a pass-the-PSP mode (it's turn-based) slipping into a multiplayer match will be easy regardless of where you are or how many PSPs you have. Worms may not have legs but the multiplayer mode sure will thanks to a map creation tool and

new weapons like the boomerang and a bunker-busting airstrike.

Like enjoying them in tequila, *Worms* is an acquired taste. Being an update of a 10-year-old game *Open Warfare 2* will win few new recruits but it will be adored by fans of the wacky RTS who've sat patiently through a decade of the half-baked 3D experiments. **Narayan Pattison**

PROS:

- Returns to its 2D origins
- Huge variety of multiplayer

CONS:

- Niche turn-based RTS
- No single-PSP four-player

VERDICT: A deep and feature-packed RTS that's well worth worming your way into.

OFFICIAL
SCORE:

08

■ Disappearing in a puff of smoke. Only a cool trick if you're not dead

PS3 PS2 PSP REVIEW

■ **GENRE:** PUZZLE
■ **RELEASE:** NOW
■ **DEVELOPER:** CAPCOM
■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** ACTIVISION

■ **PLAYERS:** 1-2
■ **PRICE:** \$49.95
■ **GAMESHARE:** NO
■ **WEB:** www.capcom.com



CAPCOM PUZZLE WORLD

More a world of dismay than a world of puzzles...

Though it's been a long time coming, *Capcom Puzzle World* has finally arrived, and as expected, the star of the show is *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo*. The simplicity of *Puzzle Fighter*'s 'crash gem' mechanic makes it highly accessible, and *Street Fighter* fans will definitely delight in the remixed tunes that serve as a soundtrack for the puzzler.

Also thrown into the mix are the three instalments of the *Buster Brothers* (AKA *Pang*) series, and *Block Block*. As you might expect, the *Buster Brothers* games are virtually identical, and while they're a decent diversion from *Puzzle Fighter*, they don't really have enough depth to stand up on their own. *Block Block*, as *Capcom*

Classics Collection Remixed owners can tell you, is an unremarkable *Breakout* clone. While the included titles may not be particularly inspiring, the features and presentation are up to the high standard of previous *Capcom Classics* compilations, with the 'drop-in/drop-out' wireless play a highlight.

Still, the real flaw that kills *Capcom*

Puzzle World is that it seems to have shipped without thorough QA testing, and will occasionally crash on loading screens, causing your PSP to shut down. Considering that an enhanced version of *Puzzle Fighter* is coming to the PlayStation Store soon, unless you're utterly rabid for a portable version, it's hard to recommend *Capcom Puzzle World*. **Nick O'Shea**

PROS:

- Includes a true classic
- Polished presentation

CONS:

- Buggy and unstable
- PF coming soon to PS Store

VERDICT: Not even a paragon of the puzzle genre can save this poor compilation.

OFFICIAL
SCORE:

04





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FILM

Rose Byrne counts the days in *28 Weeks Later*, Shia LaBeouf stares at boobs in *Disturbia*, Tony Jaa saves the elephant in *The Protector*, Jeremy Clarkson shoots a Toyota and more...

DVD OF THE MONTH

28 WEEKS LATER (MA15+)

STARRING: Robert Carlyle, Rose Byrne, Jeremy Renner, Amanda Walker
DIRECTOR: Juan Carlos Fresnadillo



Much like zombie godfather George A. Romero's recent *Land of the Dead*, *28 Weeks Later* explores the interesting premise of how civilisation proceeds in the aftermath of near extinction at the hands of a, in this case, zombie-like menace (*28 Days Later* established its infected nasties are not *technically* zombies).

It turns out the infected are top-shelf biters and droolers but not so hot when it comes to eating. All of the infected have starved to death in a couple of months, and 28 weeks after the initial infection the U.S. military has moved into London, declared the infection over and is in the process of establishing homes for refugees within

a tightly controlled militarised zone.

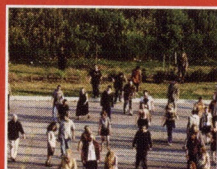
We're hardly letting the mutated virus-carrying cat out of the bag by telling you that this new infection-free utopia doesn't last. *28 Weeks Later* handles the second outbreak with tight pacing and gripping tension. Rather than the aftermath depicted in *28 Days Later*, the sequel tracks the tidal wave of death and destruction unleashed by the new infected and the difficult, unthinkable decisions the army must make in its attempts to prevent the infection's spread.

VERDICT: Kudos must be given to director Fresnadillo for masterfully capturing the flavour of Boyle's gut-wrenching original and tackling new territory for the zombie genre without biting off more than he could chew.

★★★★



DANGER: ZOMBIES!



DAWN OF THE DEAD

Zombies: The running, chasing type.

Danger: High.

How to kill 'em: Shoot 'em in the head, stand back and watch 'em go pop!

So are they really zombies? Well, they're zombies Jim, but not as we know them.



EVIL DEAD

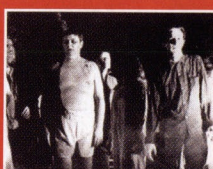
Zombies: The wisecracking, screaming type.

Danger: Moderate.

There aren't many of them around at once.

How to kill 'em: Dismemberment. With a chainsaw usually.

So are they really zombies? Not really. They're Deadites.



NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

Zombies: The groaning, shuffling type.

Danger: Low. You should be fine as long as you can walk a little faster than they can.

How to kill 'em: Guns help.

So are they really zombies? They define zombies.



28 DAYS LATER

Zombies: The sprinting, barking mad type.

Danger: Extreme. They sprint, slash, bite and infect. All in 20 seconds.

How to kill 'em: Anything will do, because technically they're still human.

So are they really zombies? Nah, but they're freakin' scary.



SHAUN OF THE DEAD

Zombies: The slow moving, shambling type.

Danger: Deadly in large packs, although a cricket bat will see to small groups.

How to kill 'em: Destroy the brain.

So are they really zombies? Yep. And there are lots of them.



THRILLER

Zombies: The dancing in unison, high pitched voice type.

Danger: Mild. You've probably got a bigger chance of being molested by MJ.

How to kill 'em: Turn off the music?

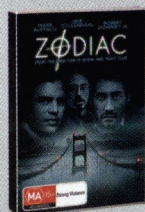
So are they really zombies? Yes, but they're a bit shit.

THRILLER

ZODIAC (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Mark Ruffalo, Jake Gyllenhaal, Robert Downey, Jr., Anthony Edwards, Brian Cox, Elias Koteas

■ **DIRECTOR:** David Fincher



From David Fincher (*Fight Club*, *Seven*) *Zodiac* brings the story of the hunt for a real-life serial killer to the big screen. During the late 1960s the San

Francisco Bay Area was terrorised by a murderer called the Zodiac who would taunt police and sent cryptic codes to authorities and publishers around the city. Fincher explores both the police investigation leading viewers down dead end after dead end. The direction and performances are typically top-notch. Fincher masterfully recreates '60s San Fran and you will be shocked at just how confronting and unflinching the murder scenes are.

VERDICT: *Zodiac* is a taut and chilling thriller – even with its hefty running time.

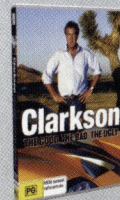
★★★★★

TV

CLARKSON – THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY (PG)

■ **STARRING:** Jeremy Clarkson, The Stig

■ **DIRECTOR:** Brian Klein



This 80-or-so minute doco is not unlike an episode of the BBC's ever-popular *Top Gear*, only the perpetually outraged Jeremy Clarkson is bereft of his partners in crime. Clarkson has

done specials like these in the past, although without usual co-presenters James May and Richard Hammond there always seems to be something missing. Nonetheless, *The Good, The Bad, The Ugly* sees Clarkson take on the US. Highlights include destroying a Prius with a heavy machine gun, shredding a Buick Park Avenue at an aircraft boneyard and road tests of the '68 Mustang GT, the Dodge Viper SRT10 and the Ford GTX1.

VERDICT: As superbly shot as any *Top Gear* ep, just a bit less entertaining.

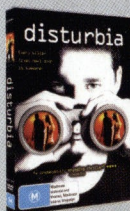
★★★★★

THRILLER

DISTURBIA (M)

■ **STARRING:** Shia LaBeouf, David Morse, Sara Roemer, Carrie-Anne Moss

■ **DIRECTOR:** D.J. Caruso



When Kale lays out his Spanish teacher in the middle of class he finds himself under house arrest. With distractions beginning to dwindle, he turns to focusing his attention, and his binoculars, on

the sexy neighbour girl's pool schedule. However, when said sexy neighbour girl catches them, Kale quickly makes up a story about their neighbour Mr. Turner and his suspicions that he is a serial killer. However, that could be more true than they realise. *Disturbia* is essentially Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* for the YouTube generation, and the quickly emerging Shia LaBeouf (*A Guide To Recognising Your Saints*, *Transformers*) makes for a likeable lead.

VERDICT: A serviceable thriller that's elevated by LaBeouf's considerable acting chops.

★★★★★

300 (MA15+)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Zack Snyder

■ **STARRING:** 600 chiselled pectorals



Zack Snyder and Frank Miller's super stylish retelling of the famous tale of Spartan heroics has deservedly eclipsed *Casino Royale* and

Pirates of the Caribbean to become the by far the best-selling Blu-ray yet.

VERDICT: The artificial film grain is a little heavy but otherwise it's stunning. Essential HD viewing.

★★★★★

THE PATRIOT (MA15+)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Roland Emmerich

■ **STARRING:** Mel Gibson, Heath Ledger



Peaceful farmer and veteran of the French-Indian war Benjamin Martin is driven to lead the Colonial Militia during the American Revolution

when a sadistic British officer guns down his son.

VERDICT: Decent flick, but the best scene is the ambush near the start, then it drags on for too long.

★★★★★

REIGN OVER ME (M)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Mike Binder

■ **STARRING:** Adam Sandler, Don Cheadle



Sandler once again shows he's capable of far more than simple comedies in this engaging flick about a man struggling to rebuild

a life shattered by 9/11. The *Shadow of the Colossus* scenes are great too.

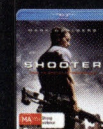
VERDICT: Engrossing but far from a great showcase for Blu-ray tech.

★★★★★

SHOOTER (MA15+)

■ **DIRECTOR:** Antoine Fuqua

■ **STARRING:** Mark Wahlberg



When Bob Lee Swagger is pulled from retirement to stop an assassination and framed, he sets about his revenge.

Wahlberg's Swagger is kind of like what MacGyver would be like if he LOVED guns.

VERDICT: Slick. Plus, people get sniped in the head. Often.

★★★★★

THE REAL INSPECTOR DAVE TOSCHI (PLAYED BY MARK RUFFALO IN *ZODIAC*) WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR STEVE MCQUEEN'S PERFORMANCE IN *BULLITT*. IN THE FILM, THEY REMARK HOW HIS SPECIALIZED HOLSTER IS LIKE MCQUEEN'S IN *BULLITT*.

TV

THAT '70s SHOW – SEASON SIX (PG)

■ **STARRING:** Topher Grace, Mila Kunis, Ashton Kutcher, Danny Masterson, Laura Prepon, Wilmer Valderrama

■ **CREATED BY:** Bonnie Turner, Terry Turner, Mark Brazill



Of all the Fox sitcoms that appeared during the 98-99 season, *That '70s Show* was the only survivor. It's not hard to see why. A coming-of-age comedy series about a group of

teenage friends growing up in 1970s Wisconsin, *That '70s Show* is an Emmy award winning laugh-fest. As the sixth season kicks off, Red is recovering from a heart attack, exchange student Fez has avoided deportation thanks to a quick marriage to Eric's sister Laurie, and Kelso has entered the Police Academy (and got his girlfriend pregnant). Just watch it.

VERDICT: Hilarious character comedy – get into it.

★★★★★

COMEDY

MAJOR PAYNE (PG)

■ **STARRING:** Damon Wayans, Karyn Parsons, Scott 'Bam Bam' Bigelow

■ **CREATED BY:** Nick Castle



Major Benson Winifred Payne, highly-strung killing machine and war hero, is being discharged from the Marines. There's nobody left worth killing, because he's

killed them all. However, Payne is a career soldier and falls apart as a civilian so his former commander finds him a gig as commanding officer of a local school's JROTC program.

Major Payne is a little like *The Goonies* crossed with *Full Metal Jacket*, only with slightly less swearing. How this has gone so long without a local release is a total mystery, but it's here now. UNITY, turds: that is the key word in UNIT, without the Y.

VERDICT: It's dated but, PG sensibilities aside, *Major Payne* is easily one of Wayans' funniest flicks besides *The Last Boy Scout* and *Bulletproof*.

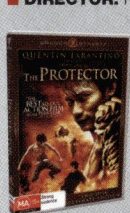
★★★★★

MARTIAL ARTS

THE PROTECTOR (MA15+)

■ **STARRING:** Adrien Brody, Diane Lane, Ben Affleck, Bob Hoskins, Robin Tunney

■ **DIRECTOR:** Prachya Pinkaew

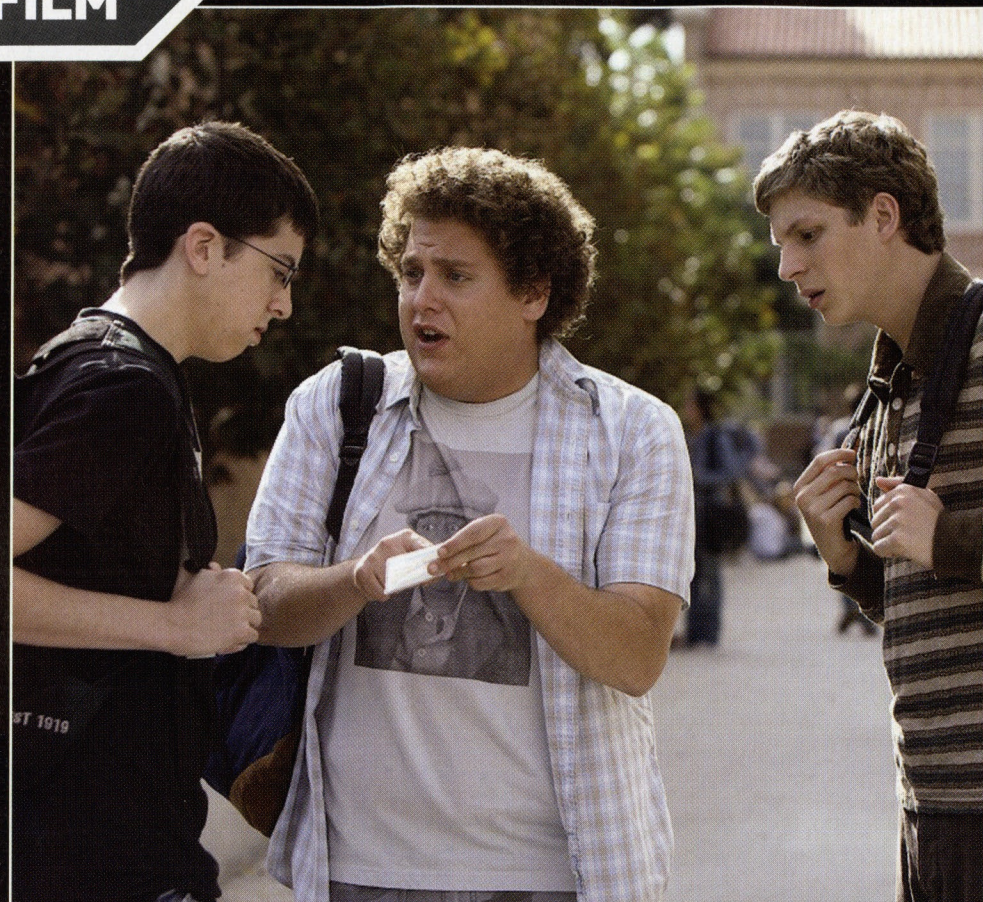


While Hollywood struggles to find a worthy successor to the action mantle left vacant by Schwarzenegger (Vin Diesel? No. The Rock? Maybe – he

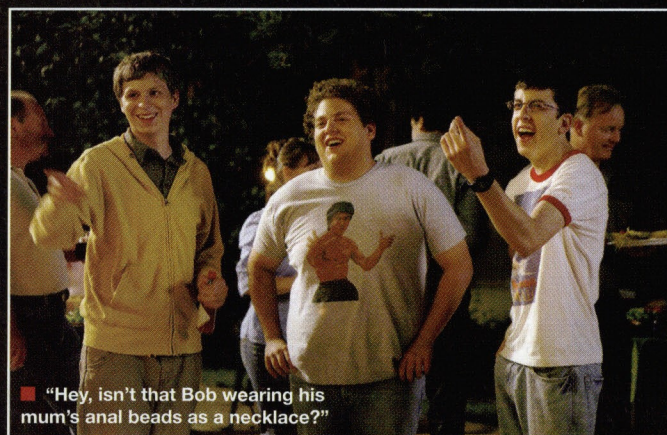
can pull of comedy) Asia has found a new Bruce Lee in Thailand's Tony Jaa – all he needs to do is establish a believable on-screen identity to go with his insane brawling skills. When a gang of poachers kidnap a bull and baby elephant and smuggle them to Sydney, it's up to Kham (Jaa) to travel down under and kick some arse. Unfortunately, the Western edit has been chopped considerably and suffers accordingly.

VERDICT: The movie itself is an incoherent mess, but there's no denying Tony Jaa's incredible martial arts abilities. Still, it's no *Ong Bak*

★★★★★



■ "I'm freakin' out, dude. I called that chick's number and she lives in a retirement home!"



■ "Hey, isn't that Bob wearing his mum's anal beads as a necklace?"

CINEMA

SUPERBAD (Rating TBC)

■ **Director:** Greg Mottola **Starring:** Jonah Hill, Michael Cera, Bill Hader, Seth Rogen, Emma Stone, Christopher Mintz-Plasse, Martha MacIsaac

Written by Seth Rogen (star of *Knocked Up*) and Evan Goldberg and produced by Judd Apatow (writer/director of *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, producer of *Anchorman* and *Talladega Nights*), *Superbad* is a hilarious coming-of-age tale in the tradition of *American Pie*. When the smart and good-natured Evan is accepted into Dartmouth and his foul-mouthed, sex-fiend best friend Seth is heading to state university, the two are forced to contemplate life apart. *Superbad* charts their attempts to turn around their lifelong losing streak with the ladies in one night. Semi-autobiographical, Rogen and Goldberg actually began writing the script when they were 14. Rogen has a supporting role as a local cop. Opens September 20.

COMING SOON

THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM

(Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Matt Damon Remember everything, forgive nothing. The third chapter of the Jason Bourne saga. Opens August 30

RATATOUILLE

(Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Patton Oswalt The story of Rémy, a rat living in Paris who wants to be a chef. Opens September 6

RUSH HOUR 3

(Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Jackie Chan Chris Tucker returns to the screen after a six-year hiatus to reunite with martial arts superstar Jackie Chan. Opens September 27

SHOOT 'EM UP

(Rating TBC)

■ **STARRING:** Clive Owen A wild mix of John Woo bullet-ballet, Sergio Leone westerns and *Looney Tunes*, *Shoot 'Em Up* is an action-fest laced with black humour and packed to the gills with guns. Opens October 18

BUZZ

The latest movie murmurs from home and abroad



BY CROM, IT'S ABOUT TIME!

The *Conan* license has been picked up by Millennium films and they hope to start production next spring. The plans are to stay faithful to the original pulp novels by Robert E. Howard. Hopefully this new movie will feature the much loved "Conan drunk/disorderly and punching out a camel" antics...



WE ARE NOWHERE WE ARE

David Slade, director of the forthcoming horror flick *30 Days of Night* is also on board to direct *Neverwhere*. Based off a novel by Neil Gaiman, the plot revolves around Richard Mayhew, an average Londonite businessman who gets drawn into, and subsequently trapped inside, a twisted, underground parallel version of London. What follows is a desperate quest to escape the nightmarish denizens that inhabit this new reality.



NOTORIOUS ON THE B.I.G. SCREEN?

George Tillman, Jr., director of *Men of Honor* and *Soul Food*, is set to direct a biopic of murdered rapper Christopher Wallace, better known as Biggie Smalls. The documentary-style flick is a chance to see the true humanity of Wallace and apparently P. Diddy is listed as the executive producer (didn't see that one coming). It should make for some interesting viewing.



IT'S A VERY DARK KNIGHT

You've got to hand it to Heath Ledger and those wacky makeup artists; because the more we see and hear of him in the newly released teaser trailer, the more his interpretation of the Joker freaks the bejesus out of us. The trailer shows us disturbing snippets of the blood drenched harlequin nemesis and the Dark Knight himself with his cool new Batpod (read: Batcycle). This one's going to be killer. *The Dark Knight* has a tentative release date of July 2008.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Sci-fi inflatable jacket now a reality

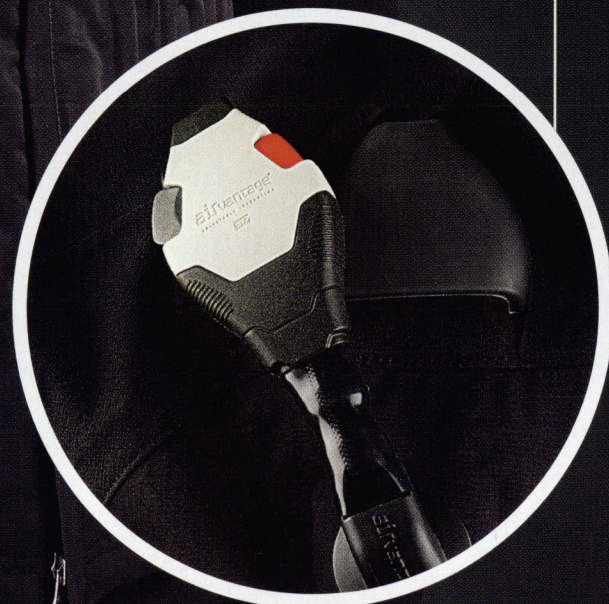
ADIDAS TECHFIT AIR VANTAGE

■ PRICE: \$TBC

■ WEB: www.adidas.com

Okay, so it may not be able to blow-dry itself at the touch of a button the way Marty McFly's jacket did in *Back to the Future II*, but if you blow into the handy valve the jacket does puff up impressively. Not only will this make you look more buff for the ladies but the inflated jacket also provides more warmth during chilly temperatures. Hell, Adidas' trendy life-saver could live up to its name when those global warming tidal waves flood civilisation as we know it. Don't say we didn't warn you.

Hold in the black button and you can blow yourself er... up. Better yet, why not call out "Blow me" to cute passers by and claim you were just talking about the jacket if they look offended.





INTERACTION

WIN! A ROMANTIC ESCAPE TO PEPPERS SALT RESORT & SPA

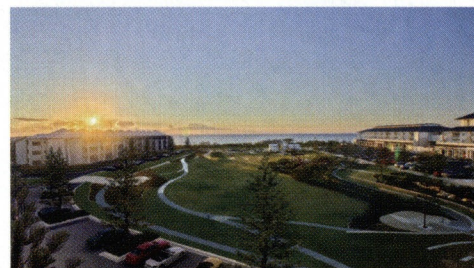


Becoming Jane is a beautiful movie chronicling the life of famed author Jane Austen and her search for true love. And what better way to recognise the launch of such a lovely movie than by giving away a truly romantic escape to Peppers Salt Resort & Spa.

Long sandy beaches, luxurious accommodation and tranquil moments to share with your loved one – experience romance combined with seaside village indulgence at Peppers Salt Resort & Spa, Kingscliff, NSW.

Be surrounded by a network of plunge and lagoon pools, tropical foliage and all the facilities you would expect of one of Australia's leading resorts. Enjoy the natural environment, take a stroll on the beach with your partner or head out for a touch of adventure. Water is central to the whole Peppers Salt Resort & Spa experience, with the stunning ocean beach on one side of the resort and the tranquil Cudgen Creek (a safe swimming and canoeing haven) on the other. Choose to do as much – or as little – as you like.

The prize includes 5 nights luxury accommodation, 5 Buffet Breakfasts, a gourmet 3 course dinner and return flights to the Gold Coast from your nearest capital city.



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The image features a man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a black t-shirt and jeans, sitting in a wooden director's chair. He is shouting into a megaphone. The chair has a white cloth draped over the back with the 'STUNTMAN IGNITION' logo. In the background, a large, yellow, heavily damaged truck is shown in a fiery, explosive environment. A car is visible in the foreground, partially obscured by the 'STUNTMAN IGNITION' logo. The logo is large, stylized, and has a star on the left. The background is a dark, textured surface.

Subscribe to OPS this month and some of you lucky champs will nab a swag of smashing Stuntman gear

Who wouldn't want a piece of this action? One supremely lucky subscriber will win the killer *Stuntman* pack that our manly staff writer Mark is sporting. The pack is valued at over \$400 and includes a *Stuntman* director's chair, megaphone, t-shirt and tie (Mark's rugged torn jeans and smoldering expression aren't as easy to come by). Five lucky runners-up will also nab themselves a styling *Stuntman* t-shirt. With every subscription to *Official PlayStation Magazine* you'll also get everything you need no matter which PlayStation you own because OPS covers everything for PS3, PS2 and PSP in one massive publication. And now for the first time ever each issue also comes packed with Australia's only PS3 demo disc! Subscribe for your chance to win the *Stuntman* pack now!

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DEMOS

All the goods on
Australia's only free
BLU-ray demo disc



WELCOME

The recent return of the demo disc was a real cause for celebration; it was kind of a big deal. People got naked, the economy went up, and people started to renew their faith in Jesus our Lord. John Howard was on the buzzer thanking us for the boost pre-election, and the Pope himself sent an email thanking us for the souls we saved. No worries big fella, all in a days work.

About five per cent of that is actually true, but what the hell – we're happy, you're happy, everybody's happy.

This month's disc is a similar pant stiffener with demos from *Armored Core 4* and *Super Rub a Dub* making their illustrious debut in addition to the old hands like *Virtua Tennis*, *Genji*, *Resistance* and *Ridge Racer*. Each one is obviously worth every second or yer well earned leisure time, so give them a whirl chappies – tell 'em Daddy sent ya.

Hugs and Kisses,
Mark Serrels



YOUR DISC

Every issue, *Official PlayStation Magazine* will bring you something no other magazine can – playable demos. Our playable Blu-ray disc will enable you to try the very latest PS3 games before you buy, often weeks before release. Why risk your hard-earned cash on a \$120 game when you can try it on our cover-mounted disc? From *MotorStorm* and *Resistance* to *Ninja Gaiden: Sigma* and *GRAVITY*, we'll always feature playable demos of the PS3 games that matter. Throw in top quality video footage of the hits of the future and our Blu-ray disc is the best bandwidth-saving bargain on the shelves.

DISC PROBLEMS?

If your disc isn't working properly, simply send it back to this address for a replacement.

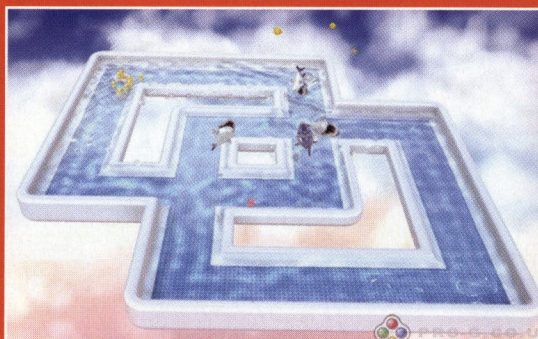
Demo Disc Returns
Official PlayStation Magazine
P.O. Box 1037, Bondi Junction
NSW 1355

Playable demo

Roll up, roll up, etc...

Super Rub a Dub

So, yeah, this game wins the title for crappiest title ever conceived, but don't let that fool you for a solitary second. Using the SIXAXIS motion-sensing, you actually manipulate the entire bathtub in an effort to save all the rubber duckies for random crap like motorised toy sharks and the like. So yeah, the whole thing makes no sense at all, but that doesn't stop it being duckin' awesome.



Armored Core 4

Those Japanese dudes certainly love their robots, big ass robots fighting other big ass robots, destroying entire cities, forming weird love-bonds between man and machine along the way. Awesome? Hmm, possibly. Well, whether you love robots or you hate them, *Armored Core 4* fits firmly into this legacy. Plus, as far as the PS3 goes, this game currently sits atop this niche genre. Give it a bash.



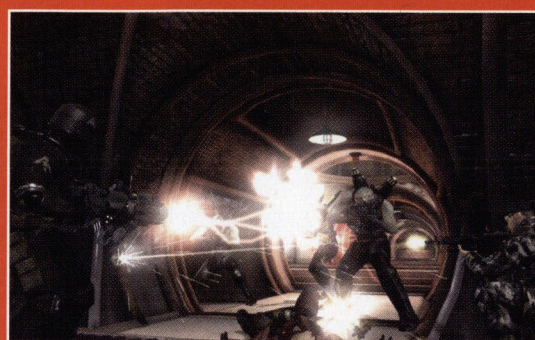
Virtua Tennis 3

The Roger Federer of the tennis sim: sharp, slick, unbeatable. *Virtua Tennis 3* is a technical master class in delivering all the best aspects of a sport in videogame form. Whether you like the sport or can't stand it, we totally recommend trying this game out for a set or two. You owe it to *Pong*. Oh, and did we forget to mention it's rendered in sizzling 1080p?



Resistance

We reckon that *Resistance* is one of the best PS3 games released thus far. Therefore, you should probably own this game by now – rendering this demo totally useless. But just in case you haven't had the chance to sample its sumptuous wares, we've placed the demo on this very disc. Oh, and buy the game. Now!



The Rest...

Oh, and don't forget to have a swatch at *Genji* and *Ridge Racer 7* chaps, and that about wraps up the demo disc for this month. Thanks for playing.

CHEATS

Get the winning edge
with *OPS* tricky cheats

PS3 PS2 PSP

RAINBOX SIX VEGAS

Cheat Codes

Start a game and press **START** during gameplay, then hold down **R3** while entering all codes.

Third Person Mode

□, ○, □, L3, L3, △, ×, △, ×, R3, R3,

Big Head Mode

○, □, ×, △, L3, △, ×, □, ○, R3

One Hit Kills Mode

L3, R3, L3, R3, ×, ○, L3, R3, L3, R3, □, △

Super Ragdoll Mode

×, ×, ○, ○, □, □, △, △, ×, ○, □, △



PS3 PS2 PSP

ROGUE GALAXY



Character Outfits

These are the different outfits that can be unlocked.

How to Unlock

Deego – Destructo Attachement
Chest on Mariglenn

Deego – Full Metal Jacket
Complete MIO's Revelation Flow

Jaster – Captain's Uniform
Finish Ghost Ship

Jaster – Desert Claw's Outfit
Complete MIO's Hunter Ranking

Jupis – Hi-Tech Mobile Wear
Complete MIO's Insectron

Jupis – Lab Coat
Chest on Zerard

Kisala – Arina's Sleeve
Complete MIO's Hunting Record

Kisala – Kisala's Swimsuit
Finish Ghost Ship: Extreme

Lilika – Royal Servant's Clothes
Chest on Juraika

Lilika – Stealth Clothes

Win the Insectron S-Rank Tournament a second time

Lilika – Sun's Beloved Wear
Complete MIO's Quarries

Simon – Cosmo Jacket
Defeat Quarry

Simon – Sho's Clothes
Finish Ghost Ship: Extreme a second time

Simon – Zero-G Suit
Complete MIO's Rare Items

Steve – Izerium Armor
Complete MIO's Factory

Steve – Zeranum Armor
Chest on Zerard

Zegram – Midnight Cloak
Complete MIO's Frog Log

Zegram – Wanderer's Coat
Chest on Juraika

PS3 PS2 PSP

SURF'S UP

Surf's Up

Enter one of the following codes to activate the cheat function.

All Multiplayer Levels
MULTIPASS

Play As Arnold
TINYBUTSTRONG

Play As Elliot
SURPRISEGUEST

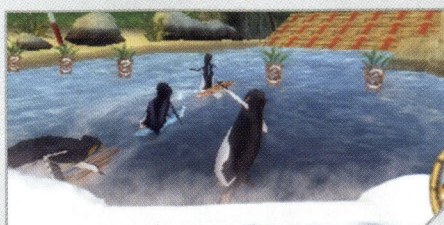
Play As Tank Evans
IMTHEBEST

Play As Zeke Topanga
THELEGEND

Ride The Astral Board
ASTRAL

Monsoon Board
MONSOON

Ride The Tiny Shockwave Board
TINYSHOCKWAVE



ARCHIVE

All the games that matter on the PS3, PS2 and PSP!

FUTURE WATCH

The PS3 games to grab in the coming months

METAL GEAR SOLID 4

Release: March 2008

This game will melt underpants: guaranteed. The only game that can compete is, of course, *GTAIV*. We'd like to see these two games duke it out, and stand in a circle shouting 'FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT', as they pummel each other to death. Yep, we're weird.

FINAL FANTASY XIII

Release: TBA 2008

The cool thing about 'Future Watch' is actually watching the games become 'present watch', when we can actually play them. Sadly it will be a while before this game is released. Obvious guess: this game will feature a tussled blonde haired hero, and a chick with enormous anime knockers.

RESIDENT EVIL 5

Release: TBA 2009

Yep, you'll be waiting a while for this. We don't really know if you should get excited for this one, since you could conceivably be dead by the time it arrives. That fact, however, did not stop us from drooling like a butcher's dog over the gobsmacking trailer on PlayStation Store. Download it now, boofhead.

GRAN TURISMO 5

Release: TBA 2008

This is a star studded future watch for sure. It's been a while since we've busted out the old boy, but we're hoping that, with this iteration, the *Gran Turismo* series can reclaim its rightful place: on an enormous pedestal, crapping on every other racer on the market. That's where it belongs.

PS3 TOP 20

07

CALL OF DUTY 3

Call of Duty 3 is a solid but surprisingly unspectacular shooter. Grab a copy of *Resistance* instead and wait for *Call of Duty 4* and *Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway*.

09

THE DARKNESS

Tentacles and guns – the perfect combination. Stunning, original and gory as hell. You'd have to be dim to miss *The Darkness*.

10

THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

One of the deepest adventures we've ever laid eyes on. Simply put – awesome. This is arguably the only RPG you'll need for some time to come.

08

ENCHANTED ARMS

Enchanted Arms is the first proper Japanese RPG for the PS3 and it's by no means a disappointment, but it's a quirky game.

08

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

Still one of the best two-player games around, with visuals that will knock the wind (and most of the teeth) out of you. Great online too.

09

FORMULA ONE

Formula One Championship Edition looks awesome and plays just as well. F1 fans, you have been called. For serious racing fans only, though.

09

MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

It's next gen as all hell. On PS2 it was damn good – on PS3 it's a must-have! Great co-op and an exhaustive list of Marvel's greatest superheroes to control.

10

MOTORSTORM

Fast, hard, dirty and utterly exhilarating. *MotorStorm* is essential for everyone's PS3. Not even the lack of split-screen can detract from this fantastic racer.

08

NBA 2K7

Technically the best b-ball sim on the street, but that won't mean much to average punters. Great, TV-style presentation and commentary should turn heads.

08

NEED FOR SPEED CARBON

A bit more Paul Walker than Vin Diesel, but still a solid racer and worth a look for series fans. Naturally, however, *ProStreet* is going to murder it.

08

NHL 2K7

A snappy, good looking hockey game with everything a fan could want, unless you already own the PS2 version. Presentation isn't quite as snappy as *NBA 2K7*.

08

NINJA GAIDEN SIGMA

Ninja Gaiden Sigma is a treasure trove of gaming goodness. Dig it up now. It's tougher than a coffin nail. Not even Chuck Norris can beat this sucker.

10

RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

The perfect launch title for PS3, and possibly the best console FPS ever made. The massive 40-player online deathmatches are more fun than you can imagine.

09

RIDGE RACER 7

Faster, sexier and more gravity defying than Jessica Alba bungee jumping. The best *Ridge Racer* yet, although you wouldn't play it over *MotorStorm*.

09

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07

A solid step forward for the best golf franchise in gaming. Still behind the PS2 in terms of content, but Tiger's never looked so good!

08

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER 2

A tense, realistic shooter. Well suited for the armchair generals amongst you, but *Rainbow Six Vegas* is better.

09

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX VEGAS

This Vegas adventure is definitely worth a look. A slick, gorgeous, accessible and utterly entertaining tactical shooter.

09

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT

Obsessive and gripping both online and off, *Splinter Cell Double Agent* will gobble you up. Obtain.

08

VIRTUA FIGHTER 5

Virtua Fighter 5 is as hardcore as fighting games get. Serious fans – start rolling up your sleeves. Tough to master but more rewarding than *Tekken*.

08

VIRTUA TENNIS 3

Still the best tennis game around, but the lack of any significant new features is a downer. Still, it's some of the best fun four people can have on one PS3.

PS3

ARMORED CORE 4

7

A very respectable mech game and a far better alternative to *Mobile Suit Gundam: Target In Sight*.

BLAZING ANGELS: SQUADRONS OF WWII

7

It's not without its flaws, but if you want a whiff of the air up there you could do a lot worse.

DEF JAM: ICON

8

There's a lot to dislike about this game, yet somehow it's won its way into our hearts. Stupid fun. Holla back! And so forth.

FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER

7

Slick, good-looking and, above all, fun. If only it was about EIGHT TIMES LONGER.

F.E.A.R.

8

F.E.A.R. is a seriously chilling ride but the graphics could've been a LOT sharper.

FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES

7

Battlelines is a game that brims with potential but fails to live up to it. Shallow fun if you're up for it.

GENJI: DAYS OF THE BLADE

5

Flashy graphics can't hide the plodding gameplay that belongs on the Atari 2600.

THE GODFATHER: THE DON'S EDITION

6

Forget *The Don*, do yourself a favour and pick up another game. The PS2 version still does the job.

HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX

6

A decent bit of Potter fluff, but its chore-like structure will probably bore most.

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: TARGET IN SIGHT

3

A rubber Godzilla of a title that looks uncooked, plays stiffly and provides no satisfaction. What a pipe blocker!

NBA STREET HOMECOURT

8

Homecourt is the brashest, most addictive arcade basketball game yet. Instant fun.

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END

6

A very shallow slash 'em up that looks the part, but doesn't feel or play the part. Frustrating. Ye be warned.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

4

This is an absolutely terrible game. Atrocious controls, poor camera, bestiality – avoid at ALL cost.

SPIDER-MAN 3

9

It's the closest you'll ever come to being a superhero this side of *The Darkness*. Web-swinging around Manhattan is tough to top.

TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8

7

Slick new visuals but still the same old skating and a severely downsized create-a-park feature. Neversoft needs to improve.

TRANSFORMERS: THE GAME

6

Worth a nostalgic one-night-stand, but that's it. Unfortunately lacking.

UNTOLD LEGENDS: DARK KNIGDOM

5

Stick to *Oblivion* – no ballads will be sung of this adventure. No stories will be told.



■ What developers have to play in hell

PS2

BURNOUT DOMINATOR

8

The reduced price-tag is tempered by the lack of crowd faves like *Crash Mode*, but it recaptures *B2*'s speed and *B3*'s intensity.

EVERYBODY'S TENNIS

7

Its lifespan may be short, but it's possibly the ideal family game that will put everybody on level pegging skill-wise.

FINAL FANTASY XII

10

This is the most superbly crafted RPG out there. You'd be completely mad to miss this one.

GOD OF WAR II

10

There is no reason not to own this game. Whack on some pants and go buy it now.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES

9

No multiplayer or co-op, but a big improvement on *GTA: Liberty City Stories*. A fitting last hurrah. Can you feel it, coming in the air tonight?

GUITAR HERO ENCORE: ROCKS THE 80s

8

At its best as good as *Guitar Hero* ever was, but only a handful of decent songs and no bonus tracks makes \$70 a tad steep.

ROGUE GALAXY

9

The send-off to the PS2's RPGs that *God of War II* was to the action genre. *Final Fantasy* who?

RICKY PONTING INTERNATIONAL CRICKET 2007

8

An under-featured update of the PS2's best cricket game, but still an absolute cracker.

SBK-07: SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2007

8

A realistic and credible take on motorcycle racing, highly recommended for bike buffs.

SOCOM US NAVY SEALS: COMBINED ASSAULT

8

A solid tactical shooter – but it lacks any real progress from the last *SOCOM* game.

PSP

AFTER BURNER: BLACK FALCON

8

Cool, arcade-inspired action – faster than a whippet on 'roids.

CHILI CON CARNAGE

6

Good humour, dodgy controls. This chili needs a few more habaneros.

DRIVER 76

7

A heady mix of *Parallel Lines*' best bits, *Driver 76* breaks new ground for itself but not the genre.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES

10

Not only is this a brilliant game, it's arguably the second best *GTA* game available next to *San Andreas*. Get it now.

METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS

9

Forget *AcId*, this is the game *Metal Gear* fans have been waiting for.

MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM 2

9

One of the finest games on the PSP to date.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6

8

Fun, easy to play and challenging enough to offer real longevity.

V8 SUPERCARS 3: SHOOTOUT

7

It looks good, it sounds good and it has a stack of options – but the handling is more arcade than sim.

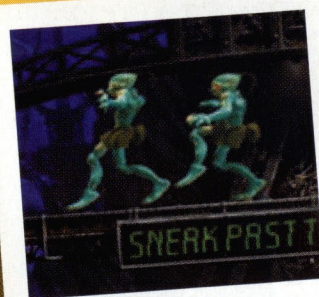
WIPEOUT PULSE

8

Fast, furious and not for the faint of heart. Bad-arse racing action sporting a solid challenge. *Wipeout* fans: acquire.

MAGIC MOMENTS

Great moments in PlayStation history remembered!



THE GAME: *Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus*
THE CONSOLE: PlayStation

THE YEAR: 1998

THE MOMENT: Controllable. Farts. Just take a second to breathe in what those two words represent entertainment-wise. Looking back, they should have just called it "Abe's Exoddus: Controllable Farts" – and they would have sold billions.

The *Oddworld* games were a unique series featuring colourful characters, taxing gameplay and a general sense of... well... oddness. The first game introduced us to Abe; an anorexic, loin cloth wearing, wannabe saviour – with some gas issues. To help Abe in his quest to free his enslaved people you had to use both your wits and some rudimentary communication skills (or Gamespeak) to solve some wicked puzzles and win the day.

Gamespeak was a revolutionary gameplay mechanic, allowing you to effectively direct and control your fellow Mudokons. As an amusing bonus, Abe could drop his guts on command and if anyone was in the vicinity they would piss themselves laughing. While it was (and quite frankly, still is) a funny distraction, it wasn't actually until the sequel, *Abe's Exoddus*, that the rumbling potential was fully harnessed and we were truly allowed to let rip.

In *Exoddus* Abe was given the ability to possess and control last night's Chicken Vindaloo – and it was pure hilarity.

After you enlisted the help of your toxic methane cloud; you could fly it independently around the level, with a hysterically entertaining two-stroke motor fart sound. You could then pester the nostrils of your unfortunate enemies or take them out completely by tactically detonating your smelly minion. It's official: there will be controllable farts in gaming heaven.





NEXT

HAZE

Check back next month
for the world's first
hands-on with this
killer PS3 exclusive!

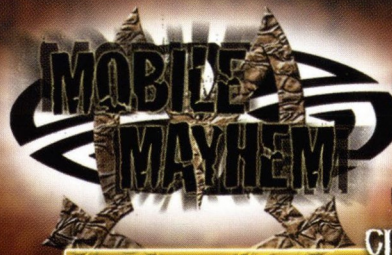


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- First reviews of *Warhawk*, *Medal of Honor Airborne*, *Skate*, *Juiced 2* and more!
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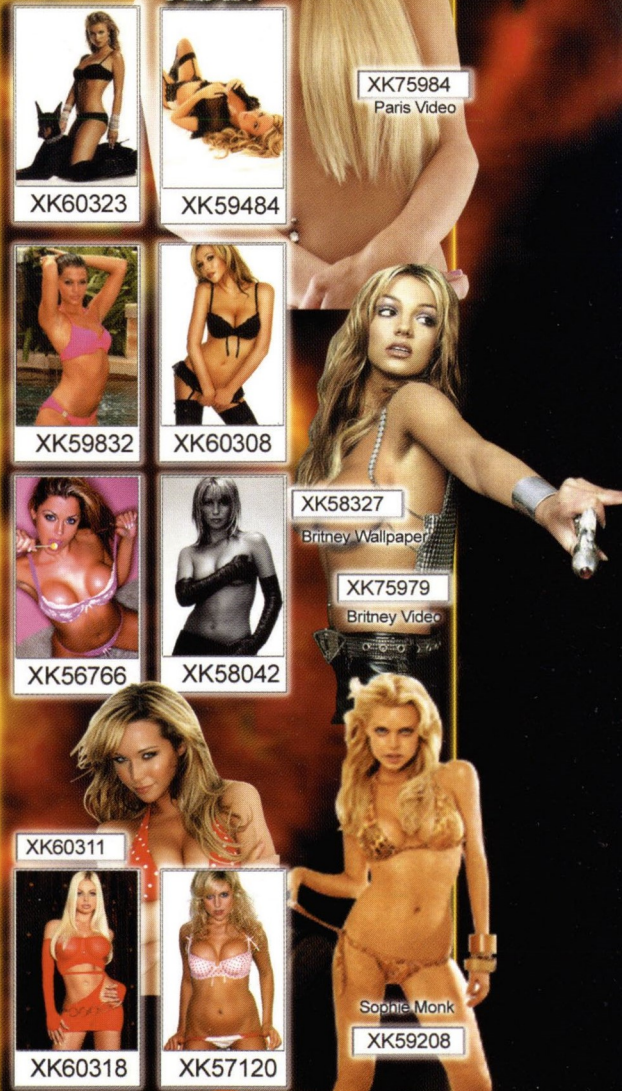


JAVA GAMES



Leisure Suit Larry & Larry Suit Bikini - Copyright © 2005 Wonderphone © 2005 Sierra Entertainment, Inc. Published by Vivendi Games Mobile. Crash - Published by Vivendi Games Mobile

BABES



TRUE TONES	FULL-LENGTH	ARTIST / TITLE
XK43480	XK46998	Fergie - Big Girls Dont Cry (Personal)
XK43425	XK46956	Rihanna ft Jay-Z - Umbrella
XK43312	XK43301	Alex Gaudino ft Cryst Water - Destination Calabria
XK43561	---	Good Charlotte - The Dance Floor Anthem
XK43431	---	Pink - Dear Mr President
XK43349	XK46027	Fall Out Boy - Thanks For The Memories
XK43329	XK46006	Avril Lavigne - Girlfriend
XK43258	---	Christina Aguilera - Candyman
XK43268	---	Akon - Dont Matter
XK43513	XK46974	Kelly Clarkson - Never Again
XK43364	XK46026	Gwen Stefani - Four In The Morning
XK43525	XK46990	Justin Timberlake - Love Stoned
XK43508	XK46971	Kelly Rowland Feat. Eve - Like This
XK43350	XK46030	Linkin Park - What I've Done
XK43398	---	Sneaky Sound System - UFO
XK43330	XK46007	Pink - Leave Me Alone (I'm Lonely)
FK43291	---	Camille Jones vs Fedde Le Grand - The Creeps
XK43593	---	Amy Pearson - Don't miss you
XK43318	XK46944	Forgie Feat. Ludacris - Glamorous
XK43188	---	Nelly Furtado - All Good Things (come To An End)

TRUE TONES ARE SOUNDALIKES OF NAMED ARTIST

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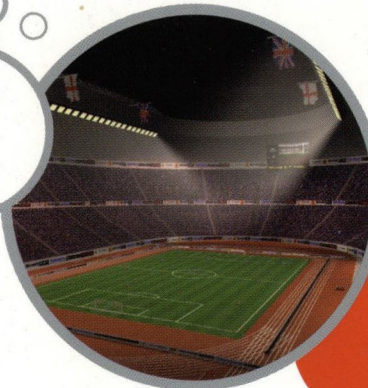
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